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THE PRINCESS HENRY OF PLESS.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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A NATIONAL . . . CALAMITY.

IT is to be feared that the country has scarcely yet begun to realise the grievous nature of the calamity that has fallen upon our rural districts. Battle and pestilence force people to give them their attention, and there are many other mishaps and misfortunes over which an uncontrollable agitation would be raised, simply because their effects are open and visible; but the destruction of our crops has been accomplished without any picturesque surroundings. It is Nature's way of doing things silently and slowly. During the past nine or ten months ruin has been deliberately prepared for the British farmer. No such year as the present abides in the memory of man. A correspondent tells us in another column that within riding distance of London there is still corn standing uncut in the fields, and the spectacle is to be seen of crops wasting in the rain, or given over to the fowls of the air. The only remarkable thing about all that just now is that it has occurred so near the metropolis. From the more distant counties come tales of even greater sadness. There are hundreds of acres still uncut in the most agricultural of the Ridings of Yorkshire, and in Northumberland and Durham a very large proportion of the crop is either relinquished altogether or harvested in such condition that it will serve only as food and litter for cattle. In the southern counties of Scotland the harvest is still ungathered, and over wide fields nothing is to be seen except little black sheaves of corn with the green sprouting at the top. Sights such as that have been visible to every sportsman who has attempted to shoot during this autumn, and if we go still further North it is to find a state of affairs more woeful, if that be possible. On many tenancies north of the Spey

the corn has simply been relinquished. Nor is there any compensation in other crops. We know that fruit was completely destroyed in Kent and the other southern counties. Potatoes are, practically speaking, a failure, and from nearly all the great districts reports of disease have been sent. As a matter of fact, much potato ground has been submerged for weeks, and has worn the appearance of a lake. The turnips, from which much was expected, have nearly all gone to leaf, and even the grass, plentiful as it is, has proved devoid of feeding quality. In another column it will be seen that Mr. McConnell, admittedly a first-rate expert in all that pertains to milking-kine and the dairy, has found the moisture detrimental to his milk returns. There is no proper nutriment in the lush grass that the rain has produced so luxuriantly. At the Dairy Show in London this was a common topic of conversation among the practical farmers, who were then able to exchange notes of their experience. As far as natural grass is concerned, it is a very bad feeding year, and though prices for meat have kept up fairly well, that is the only benefit which the farmer has derived.

For the loss of grain there has been no compensation. Time was when, if the crops were ravaged by storm, the balance was at least partly redressed by the fact that excellent prices were obtained for what remained. But this year, those farmers who have had the good luck to harvest and thrash and bring to market a portion of their crops, have found the price as low as it could possibly have been in a bumper season. The great river of colonial and foreign wheat flows on apparently independent of weather. If there is a failure in one country there is sure to be a huge crop in another, and the resources of Canada and the United States do not appear to have any limit. The consequence is that wheat at the present moment is worth about 25s. a quarter, and this price will not pay for cultivation on English soil. It has been calculated, by a very good agriculturist, that taking the average rent, average cost of labour, average price of seeds and manures, it costs very nearly 35s. to grow a quarter of wheat; and to keep well within the mark, it is certain that the farmer can have little or no profit till wheat rises above 30s. Thus even those who have a good crop, and who are compelled to sell at 25s. a quarter, lose 5s. every time. So that, even if the weather had been perfect, this would have been a bad year for agriculture. With barley, an even more painful state of things has to be chronicled. Many of our best farmers depend for a great part of their income on growing barley for malting purposes; but this barley, to find buyers, must be of the highest quality, and this year, of course, it is a failure—black, stained, unsaleable. And, again, barley is coming in to such an extent that the present price is only 23s. a quarter, a figure which spells loss and ruin.

Of course, there is another side to this question which cannot be ignored. Suppose that the supplies alluded to had not come in, the result of the year would have been to raise cereals, and consequently bread, to famine prices. In other words, a huge proportion of English-speaking men and women would have had to bear the pangs of hunger. We are not guessing about this, because it was what happened over and over again to their forefathers, who many and many a time in English history would have been glad to partake of the husks the swine did eat if they could have got them. There is no more painful reading than that which tells about the devices the poor had to resort to in order to live after a wet season. They made bread out of turnips, ground acorns down to a semblance of flour, and tried a hundred other poor devices for satisfying their unassuageable appetite. Happily our generation has not been put to shifts of that kind. Hunger, keen and widespread, has never been felt by the present generation of Englishmen as it was in what we are accustomed to call the good old days. For that the labouring men in the city have reason for gratitude. In the worst of times now they can fill their stomachs and still have something to spend on pleasures and luxuries; but yet they ought to be reminded that in proportion to the benefits showered upon them has been the distress heaped upon those who till the soil and reap the harvest. Rural England has been sacrificed to industrial England, and if the result has been to ameliorate the condition of that great army of workers who man shop and factory, it has also been to inflict hardship and distress upon the others. If, then, a way could be found to compensate the latter for the losses they sustain, industrialism might well be asked to make some little sacrifice that would ensure the result. It is only giving back a little of what has been paid to them, full measure, pressed down, and running over.

Our Portrait Illustration.

A PORTRAIT of Princess Henry of Pless forms our frontispiece this week. It is scarcely necessary to state that the Princess is the daughter of Colonel Cornwallis West, and the wife of H.S.H. Prince Hans Heinrich of Pless.



SO far the fiscal agitation has shown little promise of subsiding, and it is the one topic that seems to have living interest for Englishmen at the present moment. Looking at the thing from a purely outside point of view, it seems to us that the sides are like the mathematical impossibility of two forces continually approaching one another, yet never meeting. Platform discussion seems to be more apt to engender partisanship and prejudice than to lay bare the truth of things. It would be much more satisfactory to get together six Protectionists and six Free Traders, and make them argue the question, point by point, in a room which contained a very strict and impartial chairman, who would not allow any point to be passed till the whole twelve had come to an unanimous finding about it. After all, nineteen-twentieths of the arguments on both sides are made simply from ignorance of the facts. Let these facts be clearly and definitely ascertained, and we venture to think there would be no difficulty as to the judgment upon them. For our own part, the method employed seems merely to lead to confusion.

The country is well entitled to congratulate itself on the splendid result of the Hospital Sunday collection. The total sum given was £64,700, which is far in advance of any previous year's offering for the same purpose. The success shows not only that the number of charitably-disposed people in this country is enormous, but that there is great wealth at their disposal. No such sum as this would be given if riches were not multiplying in the land. Of course the total was considerably swollen by Mr. George Herring's munificence. He follows a peculiar plan, inasmuch as for every pound collected on Hospital Sunday he gives five shillings, and this year his total donation amounted to £12,312.

On Saturday last Lady Warwick and her students held their first meeting at the new place of abode. The hostel at Reading has been discontinued, and Studley Castle in Warwickshire acquired and turned into a scholastic institution, which will henceforth be known as the Lady Warwick College. The place is very prettily situated amid fine natural surroundings, that will make it a pleasant home for the girls, and it has the solid advantage of being close to Birmingham, which will provide a market for the produce of the garden and dairy; for we need hardly say that Lady Warwick's system of education is a very practical one, and involves actual labour on the part of the girl students who very literally have to plant their own cabbages. Moreover, success in that life depends as much on knowing how to sell as how to dig, and it will be a practical lesson for them to send supplies from Studley Castle to the Birmingham tradesmen.

It is to be feared that Lord Lansdowne's despatch on the administration of the Congo Free State, addressed to British Representatives at Continental Courts, constitutes a very serious indictment of the rule for which Belgium is mainly responsible in that region. It refers to the violation of the provision for securing free trade for all nations in the basin of the Congo; to the ill-treatment of natives; and even to hardships experienced by British subjects in the remote regions of the Upper Congo. The graver charges are confined to the administration of affairs in this upper part of the great river territory, where the influence of Consular protection must necessarily be so remote. The purport of the despatch is to suggest that the time has come for the signatories of the Berlin Act, by which the Congo was constituted as a nominally independent state, to consider whether the obligations therein imposed, especially with regard to the treatment of the natives, have been fulfilled, and, if not, to take such measures as shall be requisite for their proper enforcement.

One of the wisest deliverances that we have read for a long time is the address given by Mr. W. Somers, President of the

Staffordshire Iron and Steel Institute. He takes a just view of the position of the labouring man of to-day. He describes the worker as being, on the whole, steadier, less given to idle and wasteful habits, and more intelligent than he was thirty years ago. On the other hand, he has developed a want of seriousness and certain tastes that do not make for efficiency. One of the latter, according to Mr. Somers, is the intense excitement created by football matches. He says that the men are unsettled on Saturday morning at the prospect of seeing a test of this kind, and no sooner are their tools laid by than they rush off to become spectators. Probably it is no less true of other classes than it is of those who labour that the taste for pleasure has become much too great in these days. It ever has happened in England that excess in one direction has been followed by excess in another, and we praise the puritan no more than the profligate. There is always a golden mean.

An amusing illustration of the truth of Mr. Somers's remarks was supplied the other day. A Sunday School Convention, whatever that may precisely mean, was held at Preston last Saturday. One of the examiners asked the class who Paul was, and an urchin very promptly answered, "Full back for Swindon." At Blackburn a teacher was explaining the miracle of the loaves and fishes, and he asked his pupils if they had ever seen 20,000 people together. "Oh, ay," replied a boy; "when the Rovers played Preston North End." The anecdotes are amusing, but they have their serious side; or, at any rate, nothing whatever is gained by having the minds of Young England filled to overflowing with the lore of the football-field.

HOMELESS.

They hewed a tree down in the afternoon,
And as the mossy giant fell to earth,
Amid the groan and crack of riven wood,
A harsh, sharp cry rang outward, and there fled,
Forth from its home, a spirit of the woods.

In exile hath it wandered all the eve,
Striving to find another dwelling-place.

I heard it in the night cry out again,
That strange wild cry, half mock, half agony;
And as I lay, I shivered at the thought
Of the wood-spirit, homeless, shelterless,
Driven onward by the fierce exultant wind,
And in my ears kept ringing that weird cry. . . .
But when it beat with failing, feeble hands,
'Gainst door and pane, with dying, drear demand,
I rose, and opened door and casement wide,
And nothing saw, and nothing heard except
That mocking, moaning spirit-cry outside,
Laughing, because I thought to comfort it,
Shrieking again at its own agony.

ETHEL WELTCH.

The rain has been very intent on breaking records these last few days, and the Meteorological Office now declares that all the previous years have been beaten except 1852, which we confess not to have heard of before as a year of excessive moisture. In those twelve months, however, it appears that 34.2in. were registered; but 1903, which already has surpassed 1879, is in the way of beating 1852 also, as the total rainfall up to Monday night was 33.69in., or little more than half an inch below the previous worst. In London there have been 146 wet days in the first nine months of the year, and on the whole they have been evenly distributed through the months. In the Thames Valley the rainfall for October has exceeded that for June, which was previously regarded as the wettest month of the year. These are but bare figures, which contain no meaning until they are thought about, but a little consideration will show how much more eloquent they are than at first appears. They point to a condition of things disastrous and unheard-of.

Disastrous as the effects of recent storms and floods have been to the farmers in England and Scotland, reports from Ireland, and particularly from the West Coast, reveal a still more hopeless state of affairs. In consequence of the heavy rains many miles of land are under water. Large quantities of grain have been destroyed, and farmers have been forced to give up all hope of saving the remnants of the crops. There is no fodder to be had for the winter, and they are disposing of their stock as best they can. The worst calamity of all, however, is the practical failure of the potato crop. Dependent as he is upon this, his staple food, the outlook for the Irish peasant could hardly be more distressing, and it is greatly to be feared that a repetition of the hardships of the famine year of 1847 is not to be avoided. This pinch of poverty is already beginning to be felt by the poor, and it is to be feared that "the gentleman who pays the rent" will have his resources sorely taxed.

Mr. T. S. Dymond has been a useful man to agriculture, but the result of his experiments with cows will be received with scepticism. He has come to the conclusion that with a large number of animals a determining factor in the quality of the milk is the individuality of the milker—that is to say, the cow who likes the person who milks her will give milk with a higher percentage of butter-fat than she would to a stranger, or one to whom she had conceived a hostility. As far as yield goes the fact was very well known before Mr. Dymond began his experiments, but that the butter ratio depends neither on food nor on treatment, but on breed, has hitherto been the accepted belief, and it will be instructive to find out on what facts Mr. Dymond bases his theory.

Russian newspapers contain very bad news of the harvest in that country, which this year, instead of sending wheat to us, will have to buy wheat from abroad. Very great distress is said to prevail among the rural population, and many of the peasants have had to sell their cattle on account of the scarcity of forage. There is, therefore, no milk for the children. In the province Riazan the hay crop is two million quintals below what it was last year. In Siberia the harvest is very bad, and the new wheat has been found to be mixed with ergot, which already has had poisonous effects. A dearth of wheat in a country where protective tariffs are in force is of rare occurrence, and it will be most interesting to note what steps are taken to prevent bread rising to what would be to the poor people famine prices.

OCTOBER.

The Hunter's moon

Rules o'er October, and with sad eyes see;
Ripe chestnuts tumbling headlong from the trees;
The scarlet maple dying in one flush
Of dawn and sunset; and she hears
The robin's faltered notes of hopes and fears—
An autumn-sounding, autumn-coloured tune—
Sing down the thrush.

The Maiden's Blush

And Damask rose have passed away too soon,
And when the day is warm at height of noon
The Seven Sisters' branches hanging down
Show but dry leaves and petals limp and brown.

The swallows, finding leafage sparse of boon,
And no hour bounteous to them as of old,
With warm soft rain and sun's imperial gold,
And stir and hum of winged life manifold,
Grew tired of naked earth and thinning trees,
And flew to seek for summer overseas.
And now Earth lifts her finger, saying, "Hush!
Leaf-quilts are covered o'er my sleepy flowers;
They shall not stir till waked by April showers—
Hush!"

NORA CHESSEX.

At the end of last week Lord Onslow, President of the Board of Agriculture, was speaking at Exeter, and commending the National Poultry Organisation to the serious attention of Devonshire farmers. At a time when agriculture is depressed, he said that it was well for the farmer not to neglect any of the opportunities offered by small things. Certainly, when we read the statistics of the eggs and of the poultry that are sent over to us from different parts of the Continent, it does give us cause to wonder what our own cottagers and small farmers are doing that they let so large a demand be supplied from abroad. The means pointed out by Lord Onslow, in which the National Poultry Organisation would be especially able to help the farmer, were in the disposal of his eggs and poultry, by bringing the producer and the consumer into closer touch, and by doing away with the services and the profits of the middleman.

At an inquest held the other day a very pathetic illustration was given of the cruelty underlying many of the modern conditions of work. By means of combination the workmen have been enabled to increase their wages largely, but on the other side of the matter is this fact, that the old and feeble are much more hardly dealt with than under the old condition of things. The inquest we refer to was held by Dr. Wynn Westcott on the body of Michael Kelly, aged 50, a scaffolder of Saffron Hill. It was stated that he had been out of work for some time, and that being unable to find employment in London he had gone in search of it to St. Albans. At each place, however, he was told that he was too old, and returning home broken-hearted, he became ill and delirious, the end being that he had to be removed to the Holborn Union Workhouse, where he died within a few hours. In this way many a victim falls out of the fight without even the brief notice of an inquest to chronicle the fact. This is one result of reducing the relationship of employer to employed to what Carlyle called the cash nexus.

It is tragic news that the Africans of the Gold Coast are earning so much money at the mines that they are giving up what the recent annual report describes as "native costume"—we have generally imagined that it did not mean such a very great deal to give up—and are taking to the "far less becoming European dress." There is an element of humour about all this, and about the solemn way in which the announcement is made; but it is very disappointing of the African. What is more satisfactory is that the natives of West Africa seem to show none of the reluctance to work underground which is so large a factor in the labour question in South Africa, where the Kaffir is singularly little disposed to the subterranean mining. Whatever the development of the gold-mining in West Africa may be, it will be long before the question of importing the Oriental looms on the horizon of practical politics in that region.

Few features of the strange lands of Central Asia are stranger or more celebrated than the great Amu Daria, the ancient Oxus, which, according to the Odessa correspondent of a morning newspaper, has been attempting once more to change its bed. For more than two and a-half centuries this river has flowed into the Aral Sea, but for four hundred years before that, according to ancient records, its destination was the Caspian, while it has changed its whole course in the same way yet once again within the period of which we have records remaining in the later classical authors. At the beginning of last month, for the first time in several generations, the Amu Daria began to break new ground again. Swollen by unusual floods, like our own rivers at home, it began to drive a new channel in the direction of a prosperous town which has sprung up of recent years in the neighbourhood of the great bridge on the Trans-Caspian Railway line. A thousand men have been engaged day and night for weeks past in constructing dams to protect this town and keep back the river in its old bed, and the cost of the work has already amounted to many thousands of pounds. At an outlay of enormous labour and expense, it is possible that modern engineering science will at length succeed in bringing the "Mad Daria," as the natives call it, to a normal state of control.

Few questions can be of greater importance to the community than the treatment of lads sentenced to imprisonment at an age when their characters are not yet set permanently for evil, and it is eminently satisfactory to learn, from the lately-published Prisons Report, that the system adopted for the management of these lads at Borstal. Prison appears to be working excellently. As the system has hardly yet been tried for a year, it is, of course, still too early to form any conclusive opinion of its success; but very strong testimony is given of the way in which these young convicts of from sixteen to twenty-one appear to respond to its influences, and to show signs of developing that self-respect which is one of the chief guarantees of honest living. Methods of much the same kind have also been put in practice at Dartmoor Prison, and here, too, their effects are said to be most hopeful. Whereas hardly a more effective means of degrading the character for life could be imagined than a term of imprisonment under the conditions which were once universally accepted, there is every reason to believe in the possibility of the permanent reclamation of a considerable percentage of youthful criminals under a firm and wise reformatory system of treatment, such as has now been adopted at Borstal.

No one will deny that an ill-conditioned terrier may prove a nuisance to the harmless cyclist, but the latter is scarcely justified in adopting the means of getting rid of the enemy tried by a gentleman who was brought up before the "Cadi" at Enfield the other day. He bought a cyclist's pistol and charged it with a 50 per cent. solution of ammonia. On October 7th the dog ran out barking as usual, whereupon the wheelman discharged his weapon in its face. It ran away howling, and later it was found that its sight had been entirely destroyed. So the cyclist got rid of the dog, but the magistrate, holding that the means were cruel and illegitimate, fined him 20s. and costs, or twenty-one days' imprisonment. The curious fact about it is that the man had been acting on the advice of a cyclists' paper, which, one would think, is in duty bound to pay the fine. It is well that others should know the risk they take by accepting advice of the same kind.

There will be a curious "concatenation of circumstances" on November 12th, when our two Archbishops, of Canterbury and York, will celebrate their silver weddings. Both are Scotchmen, and both were married on the same day twenty-five years ago, Dr. Maclagan, the Archbishop of York, being then the Bishop of Lichfield, and Dr. Davidson, the present Primate, being then Chaplain to Archbishop Tait, whose daughter he married. It is certainly a singular coincidence.

PARTRIDGE-DRIVING at QUIDENHAM.

THE line from Ely to Brandon, Thetford, and on to Norwich, runs, for the greater part of the journey, through the most perfect shooting ground in England. One of the many rivers named "Ouse" runs through the first part, through a valley widening into fen at Lakenheath, near where was the celebrated Feltwell Fen, the last home of some of the rarest birds of Norfolk. Then the ground on either side becomes mixed with river and occasional meres and reed-beds in the centre, light heaths, woods, and cultivated land on the sides, all famous for duck, partridges, pheasants, and ground game, until you near the vast heaths of Roudham, where the bustards used to live, and Thetford Warren, famous for rabbits and the Norfolk plover.

These Norfolk heaths consist mainly of thin turf and bracken-beds, and are studded with Scotch fir and belts of the same tree. Famous shootings, such as Hockwold, Feltwell, Didlington, and Merton, lie in this country. A little further on by Eccles and East Harling, where cultivation takes the place of heath, is Lord Albemarle's estate of Quidenham. Quidenham Hall, a fine old red-brick mansion, stone faced, with its tall pillars and pediments, and a fine interior, was converted from an Elizabethan house, the shell of which (a very thick shell) still forms the centre. It is full of memorials of past generations of Keppels, and of trophies won by them by land and sea, from the great red and yellow flags of Spain, with the Castles and Lions, taken from the Moro Castle at Havannah, where no less than three of the family were commanding forces by land and sea, to

the battered rifles, hats, and bandoliers, the hard-won relics of the Boer War, in which the present owner of Quidenham commanded the infantry of the C.I.V.

When Lord Albemarle succeeded to the property he applied himself to another form of tactics—the management of partridge-driving on the estate. The methods employed are the result of years of practice and experiment, and while some of them are, no doubt, in general use elsewhere, some features are not

common, while others are practised with such success on the estate in question, that it might very possibly be well worth while to try them elsewhere where similar conditions prevail. Among these more especially are the means taken to get birds on the move in the right direction before they are flushed against a high wind, and the use made of independent flanking parties to "put in" birds neatly before the main line of drivers as they advance.

But a word should be said as to the means used to preserve and increase the stock of partridges. The great improvement made by driving the birds was observed in a very marked manner on this property. But birds do not increase by driving alone, and the protection given them in the nesting season is all-important. The soil is excellent, very light, but with plenty of cultivation and plenty of water. The fields are very large—some must contain 100 acres—but the fences are large and high, and set on low banks, giving excellent shelter to the guns, and making good nesting-places, in which the birds are not readily washed off their nests, even in such torrential rains as those which lasted for two days there last June. That



W. A. Rouch.

THE GUNS STARTING OFF.

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A BIG LOT OVER THE ROAD.

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after the worst season on record since 1879 there should be as good a head as there is this year says much for the character of the ground and for the methods of preservation. Lord Albemarle's first care was to have the whole estate, some 9,000 acres, thoroughly trapped and cleared of vermin; and this vigilance is steadily maintained, all ground vermin, especially rats, being rigorously kept under. Also, there are no foxes. No birds are artificially reared, but "outside eggs" are picked up, and distributed in the nests of other birds. The stock was reinforced when the present system was begun by some fifty brace of Hungarian birds for change of blood. These additions have been made annually since on a smaller scale, and no doubt is entertained that the result has been good. Great reliance is placed on change of blood by means of eggs, "if even from the next parish," and by regular importation of fresh stock. In regard to the alternation or sequence of good or bad seasons, Lord Albemarle finds that it does not necessarily follow that a bad year succeeds a bad year. Pairs of partridges always annex a certain amount of ground for themselves, and, provided there is a fair stock in the district, distribute themselves pretty evenly. "We have only had two good seasons, to my thinking, in the last ten years," he writes, "and that is above the average. Methods, not numbers, are what we are mainly interested in. But in a good year 1,500 brace from 6,000 acres is a fair sample here. More might be killed; but there is very little shooting on this estate except the big days. Since driving was begun here we have done immeasurably better than before. With an additional 3,000 acres, which we now let, my grandfather never killed more than 1,433 partridges in a year." The best single days on this estate were 750 partridges in 1896 (211 brace per diem were averaged for four days' shooting), and 568 partridges (or 1,145 birds in three days). This bag was made in 1897. A very fine record for this estate. There have been plenty of days of 160 to 200 brace in other years. The best drive known here was 120 brace killed over the same fence, and the best stand for one gun, 73 birds.

The best day's driving to one gun, it may be added, was 39 brace. How it came that one gun had matters all to himself, was due to a disappointment—though the day was not one in other senses. Telegrams arrived at breakfast-time to say that the three guns invited could not come. So as all arrangements were made and the drivers there, Lord Albemarle had a day all to himself, unintentionally. It may be added that other causes than preservation by keepers have aided in increasing the partridges at Quidenham. The relations between not only landlord and tenants, but also with all engaged on the land, are cordial. "The shepherds," says Lord Albemarle, "are a great help." One beat has no keepers; it is entirely left to the shepherds. The farmers are pleased to see the head of partridges increase; and the labourers are keen on being employed as drivers, and learn their business and place in what, it must be owned, is a form of manœuvring, and of both concerted and independent action, needing a good deal of understanding, and which could not be done, as it is at Quidenham, unless the drivers were individually keen. The



W. A. Rouch. AN EASY BIRD TO LORD HERBERT SCOTT. Copyright—"C.L."



W. A. Rouch. BIRDS COMING VERY FAST IN A GALE. Copyright—"C.L."



W. A. Rouch. A 'HIGH BIRD TO SIR FRANCIS CORBETT. Copyright—"C.L."

work is hard, too; owing to the very large fields it is not possible to have a number of short drives, as at Holkham, for instance. The men have to fetch in ground for long distances, and do a deal of flanking on occasion. Premising that there are two sets of drivers, about fifty in all, and that one set has white flags and the other red ones, each man carrying a flag, the following general rules are in vogue, unless specially altered, which they are in some cases. The men advance silently; they use their flags but not their voices. The head-keeper is mounted, and rides in the middle of the line as a rule. Every driver has the same place, and keeps it throughout the season, so that he



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AFTER LUNCHEON.

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RIGHT OVER THE TREES.

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thoroughly learns his work, and, if he is at all sharp, improves, and is ready for emergencies. By regular employment year after year, they also learn the lie of the land, and have a shrewd notion of what to do when engaged in the more or less independent work of acting as side parties and "putting in" birds in front of the last part of the drive from the side. This plan is carried out very successfully at Quidenham. It may be best likened to the method of "centring" at Association football, where the man on the extreme wing suddenly sends the ball flying at right angles across, and drops it in the centre, at a convenient distance before the goal, for the main line of forwards to send it on and through. This "centring" is done to a nicety by the Quidenham independent forward flank parties, the distance



W. A. Rouch.

SOME TALL BIRDS.

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from which the birds are sent across and into the line, whence they are driven forward at right angles, being often very considerable. When there is a heavy cross wind these flankers may close in and line a fence on the dangerous side. But they only show their flags, not themselves, and keep these wagging over the hedge top. The birds are more afraid to pass the flags alone than to do so when they see their old friends, the farm men, acting as beaters and carrying them. All the keepers who can be spared come with the party, and each brings one dog and no more. They are expected to pick up at once for any gun who has not a dog with him. Thus there is no time lost in picking up first one gun's birds, and then walking on to find those killed by another.

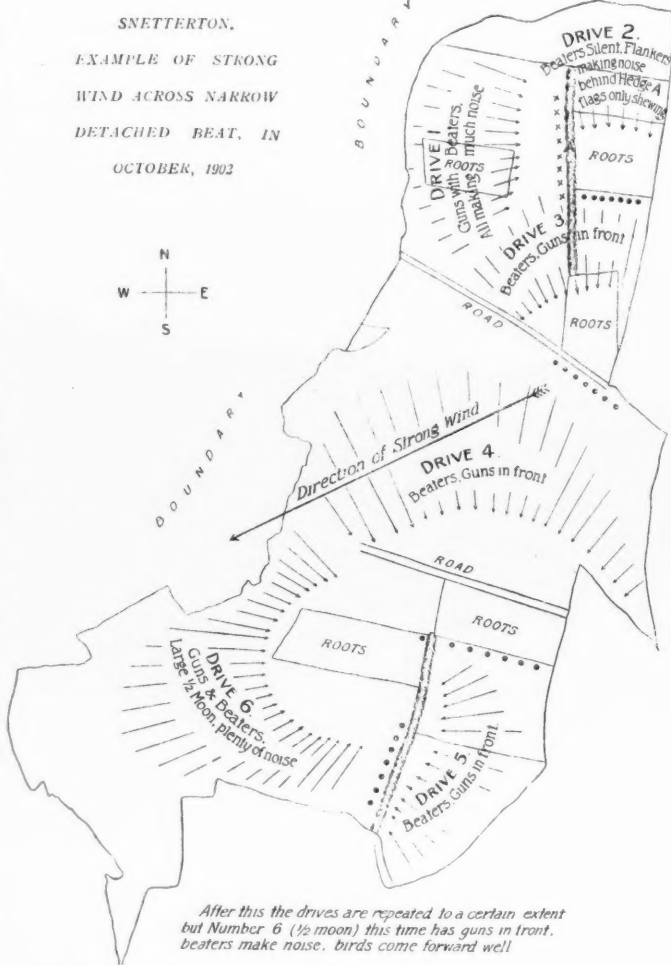
Time, or birds, are often lost at a big day's driving, either by going to a distance to lunch under cover, or by having the luncheon in full sight of all the birds, which have just been well broken and sent over in the last drive or so. Ammunition and game carts, a motor or two, a carriage, a big tent, eight or nine guns, ladies, non-shooting guests, all the loaders, and perhaps half the beaters at some little distance, all cheerfully talking, are rather an unusual sight to the partridges in the middle of what, up till then, have been quiet fields. They cannot imagine what is coming next, and are only too eager to move away from the vicinity of such an alarming assembly. At Quidenham a neat use is made of a peculiarity of the ground, though the same feature is common on many properties.

There are a number of old, rather shallow chalk-pits on different beats. One of these, close to where the last drive before luncheon takes place, is selected, and the luncheon-tent there pitched quite out of sight. There is always a road into these pits—that, namely, by which the original diggers hauled the chalk or gravel out. The sides also deaden the inevitable sound of conversation, and the trees by which they are often surrounded do this still more. In the big pit where the luncheon was held on the first of the two days, the shooting on which is illustrated in this article, there were natural "compartments" separated by banks. In one the tent was pitched, another sheltered the loaders, while one lot of drivers—those last engaged—had the choice of a third compartment or of a sheltered farmyard. Directly luncheon was over the driving began again, the first stand being only a short way off the luncheon ground. Note that only one set of drivers have their luncheon at this time. The others sat down to theirs at the finish of the last drive but one, and will be out and ready to start the first drive after luncheon, by the time that the

shooters have refreshed the "inner man." The shooting shown in the illustrations, which took place in October, formed a good example first of what may be called a normal day on a fairly easy beat in quiet, though dark weather (better for shooting than for photographing, for there was hardly a ray of sun), and of another day (the second), on a particularly difficult, long, and narrow beat, on the outside of the ground, carried out in a gale in October.

The occasion was just one of those in which two of the manoeuvres which the host particularly enjoys putting into force against the birds and the wind are most effective. Lord Albemarle's very serious accident, which he incurred when a Basuto pony suddenly fell with him in the Row at the end of last summer, when, to everyone's great regret, he was most seriously injured and prevented from walking, made it impossible for him to be with his guests. But the methods are briefly these: In forcing birds up from the down wind end of the beat against the wind, the guns are often brought into the line with the drivers, and the whole body, thus reinforced both with guns and noise, half-moon the birds up against the wind. Those of the latter which will break back are shot or shot at, while the others are much more inclined to run forward, both because there are men and guns behind them, and no guns in front. When thus got on to the middle of the ground again they can be dealt with in the ordinary way. Another useful detail when driving birds up against the wind, is that the standing order for silence is reversed. Ordinarily under such circumstances the birds do not hear the drivers, and let them get quite close, when they are more than likely to rise in a fan and come back over their heads. Therefore the beaters are told to make as much noise as ever they can. The birds hear this, get their heads up, and start running in the right direction—i.e., against the wind—long before the beaters reach them, and, generally speaking, fly well forward. The dangerous side is also held up by flankers, who keep down under the hedge, but vigorously wave their flags above it.

The shooting which the photographs (taken on very dark, windy days) illustrate took place on Wednesday and Thursday, October 7th and 8th. On both days the Hon. Derek Keppel directed operations. The first day was on the Hill Harling beat. This is not difficult ground to manage, and gave, even in this season, a good day's sport. The third day was on a peculiarly difficult beat called Snetterton. As it is long, narrow, and on the boundary, when a strong wind is blowing



W. A. Rouch.

MAJOR G. C. NUGENT.

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across it towards the latter, there is every chance that the birds might be driven right off it. Its management in such weather offers a particularly good example of the methods in use, especially of the system of half-mooning with the guns in the driving line occasionally to force birds up away from the boundary and against the wind. The plan shows exactly how this

beat was managed in October, 1902, when hardly a bird was lost off the ground, though there was a strong wind blowing right across in the direction of the boundary. The crosses show where in two or three of the drives flankers are hidden behind a hedge, only showing their flags, but making a noise, to hold up birds.

C. J. CORNISH.

THE RETRIEVER TRIALS AT BERGHOLT.

VERY gradually shooting men are beginning to appreciate the value of field trials for sporting dogs. Hitherto the usual custom of the average man when buying a dog has been to judge of his merits by his looks alone, or, at most, by a perfunctory trial. The International Gun-dog League have earned the gratitude of all sportsmen by their energetic endeavours to teach us what a really good dog ought to do in the field. In their two days' meeting, run over Mr. C. C. Eley's estate of East Bergholt, they were exceedingly unfortunate in the matter of weather. It rained almost continuously on both days, and, as a result, there was practically no scent, so that there could be no really trustworthy test of the capacities of the various competitors, to say nothing of the discomfort of the spectators, who patiently trudged through wet roots and over sodden fields. A minor matter for dissatisfaction to our readers was that it was only at rare intervals that the clouds lifted sufficiently to allow Mr. Rouch to take a photograph, and even then the light was so bad, that the results are marvellous. Mr. Eley's estate is an ideal one for the purpose; the fields are large and the soil light, while the stubble is long, probably because most of the crops were laid this year, and the close-cutting reaper could not be used. In any case the birds lay close, and thus made walking up possible. The programme was so arranged that the first few fields were walked, and then a drive took place, then more walking and a drive, and so on. The reason for the walking tactics was very soon apparent, for the proportion of running birds was very much greater than during a drive, and although this is not a state of affairs to be desired in an ordinary day's shooting, a winged bird gives more scope to the dog who is sent to retrieve him, and allows the spectator to form an opinion as to his merits. Game was not so plentiful as might be wished, but considering the season there was a fair number of birds, and, as has been said, they were by no means wild. This was partly due to Mr. Eley's self-sacrifice, for he had done practically no shooting over his estate before the trials, and partly to the good understanding that exists between the tenant farmers and their



W. A. Rouch.

SANDIWAY MAJOR RETRIEVING.

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landlord. Although the entry was not a record one, the twenty nominations were quickly filled, and quite as many applications were refused. The judges were the Hon. G. W. Lascelles and Mr. S. Smale, assisted by Mr. W. Arkwright, who at the last moment consented to share their arduous and thankless labours. Each judge undertook to watch the behaviour of two or more dogs in turns, and, after having formed an opinion, to compare notes with his colleagues. The difficulty of coming to a correct decision was very apparent; the numerous and long consultations of the judges were exceedingly tedious to the spectators, who were obliged to stand about in sodden garments, often in the middle of a turnip-field. When the prizes were finally awarded, however, the judges' decision was almost unanimously accepted as perfectly just, although in the case of Sir Henry Smith's Klepper the general consensus of opinion was that the dog had been most unfortunate. He had done good work the first day, retrieving accurately and quickly, and towards the end of the second day he was sent to retrieve a strong runner; while picking up the line, another bird was dropped within a few yards of him. He retrieved the second bird smartly, but



W. A. Rouch.

IN THE ROOTS.

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was unable to find the line of the runner he was originally sent for, and thus lost his chance of securing a prize. When it is remembered that the heavy rains had washed away almost every atom of scent, it will be seen that the rest of the entry must have been exceedingly good when such a venial sin disqualified a dog. The prizes were finally won by the following: First, Major Eley's Satanella; second, Captain Eley's Sandiway Major; third, Mr. C. C. Eley's Bergholt James; fourth, Mr. A. Aitchison's Jubilee Moll; and fifth, Mr. H. Sawtell's Melksham Prime—this last was a special prize awarded on the field. Certificates of merit were given to the following dogs: Mr. E. G. Buxton's Lexham Bob, Sir Henry Smith's Klepper, Mr. Sawtell's Melksham Wallace and Melksham Victor, and Mr. Percy Heaton's Lady Ainslie. Satanella won the Challenge Cup presented to the society by Mr. B. J. Warwick, while Bergholt James carried off that kindly given by Mr. Eley; Moll and Prime divided the prize given by Mr. W. Arkwright for the best working retriever which had not previously competed at these trials. Captain Webb's Sandiway Nellie was adjudged the beauty of the meeting; and Melksham Wallace showed the greatest dash combined with steadiness. A prize of £20, given by an anonymous admirer of the breed, for a dog which had won three first prizes at the principal shows, was not awarded. This fact may be considered instructive, but, all the same, it may be slightly misleading. Many of the competitors were quite good-looking enough to be sent to the show-ring, and, indeed, a fair proportion of them have won laurels at dog shows; but there seems to be an idea prevalent among breeders and trainers that the time spent in preparing dogs for show is so much time wasted, which might have been devoted to their education. However much truth there may be in this theory, there can be no question that the retrievers run in the trials at Bergholt were thoroughly well schooled, and are as fine-looking a lot of dogs as even the most critical could wish to see. If the writer may be permitted to make a suggestion,

he would like to say that it would be a more thorough test of a dog's usefulness if he was tried in water. On a great many shooting estates there is a river or stream running through some of the best coverts, and many retrievers which work admirably on land fail in a most lamentable way when they are asked to bring a bird across the water, while others take to it as if it were their natural element. Early training, of course, has a great deal to do with this. If a dog, when he is just beginning to take an interest in his work, is given a hard day in cold water, and tied up before he has been allowed to dry himself properly in clean, dry straw, the inevitable consequence is that he suffers more or less, and it is unlikely that he will take kindly to his duties next time he is asked to enter the stream. Or, again, if a nervous young dog is forced into icy water against his will, it is long odds that he will never become very efficient in that element. The difficulties of such a test are obvious, but it would certainly add greatly to the value of a dog if he were certified as good both on land and water. With this very small criticism excepted, we must admit that the International Gun-dog League have done much to improve the breed of working retrievers, and we hope their efforts will be equally successful in years to come.



W. A. Rouch.

RETRIEVING TO HAND.

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THE TRAGEDY OF THE OAK TREES.

SAD to relate, these monarchs of the woodland, laid low at Bramshill Park by the fearful gale of September, are but a typical example of the havoc which has been wrought amongst the trees of Great Britain and Ireland by the rude winds of 1903. Indeed, almost the only consolation left to lovers of the country, now that this year of storm and flood begins to pass away, is that the trees which

have stood through the fury of the gales must be tough beyond all common measure, so that they may be relied upon to withstand almost any force of wind in the years to come. The year has seen gales without number—for that matter, one which would certainly be classified by the officer of the watch in a King's ship as 8, that is to say, a "whole gale" in merchant shipping parlance, is tearing off the dying leaves at the moment of writing.

But the two which will be remembered, the two which have left their marks most deeply on British scenery, are those of February and September. The former was terrific everywhere, but in Southern England, mainly because the deciduous trees were bare of foliage, its most ferocious ravages were among the pines and the firs. Indeed, I shall not readily forget the desolation which was spread before my eyes, chapter after chapter, during sundry journeys along the South Western line, and the South Eastern also, in the early spring. But the impression left by them is as nothing compared with those produced by travels in the West of England and in Ireland then and a little later. In the West of England and Wales men did not talk of the gale of any particular date, for day after day and week after week the wind swept with resistless force from the west and south-west, and trees perished by thousands. Nay, more, buildings were knocked down bodily, and at Holyhead an iron church, irreverently known as the tin tabernacle, was swept into as complete a ruin as though it had been a child's edifice of cards. In Ireland the story was the same, but worse,



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CUTTING UP A MONARCH.

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A FALLEN OAK NEAR THE LODGE.

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to use an Irish expression in relation to an Irish subject. It came to my lot to follow in the footsteps of the King as he made his memorable tour in Ireland, and everywhere, save in Connemara, where there are no trees to speak of, the mischief wrought by the first great series of storms in the year was painfully conspicuous. Nowhere was it more manifest than in the Phoenix Park and in the immediate vicinity of the Viceregal Lodge, where His Majesty stayed during that period of his visit which was devoted to Dublin. Here the victims were mostly elms, which only a poet can be allowed to call immemorial, since they are the most treacherous and perishable of trees, and the stock remark of the car-drivers was that coffins would be cheap for a long time. Most of these, bare of foliage although they were at the time, had been laid low by one terrific hurricane, which seemed worse than the others; but the truth most likely was that the wind blew every whit as hard afterwards, only there were no trees with any inherent weakness left to be destroyed. Those gales, it seemed to inhabitants of the West at the time, had something approaching to a demoralising influence on men and women. Hearing the roaring of the wind by day and by night, forcing their way against it with slanted bodies when necessity arose, knowing that it was hopeless to make plans for doing anything out of doors, face to face, in fact, with the elemental forces of Nature, they grew desperate. They began to think that nothing mattered so long as they could gain temporary shelter from the din and fury of the blast. They cried: "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die!" and they ate and drank, and, as a matter of fact, for this has been a more than commonly healthy year, more than the usual percentage of them survived.

Fiercer still, it seemed to me, residing at the mouth of the Vale of the White Horse, was the gale of September, which caught the hapless trees in full leaf. It ought, one would think, to have brought about infinitely more destruction than the storms of the earlier part of the year, for it certainly blew every bit as hard—my old house, low as it stands, shook till the books fell from bookshelves, and the lone pine near it bent like a split-cane trout rod with a 3lb. trout on the line—and the sail area of the trees in leaf must be such as to catch incalculably more wind than the bare branches. But, as a matter of fact, in this district, where oaks are not numerous, few trees, except elms, were torn up by the roots, and the walnut trees, in which the district abounds—to no purpose, so far as the harvest of nuts goes this year—were the greatest sufferers. Many of them lost limbs, and will look unsightly for a while. But my experience is that the wind is Nature's pruning-knife for the walnut, that the upper limbs are always more or less hollow and rotten, and that if they fall at night, as they generally do, no great harm is done; for in

a wonderfully short time a dense mass of twigs and leafage will fill the gap left by the lost branch. Generally, however, the havoc, and the tales of it, have been less than might have been expected; and the reason is probably not far to seek. Irishmen have a witty saying to the effect that the South African War effected one beneficent purpose, at any rate, by taking all the unsound horses out of Ireland. In like manner, it may be, the tempests of the early part of the year thinned out most of the weakling trees, and those that are left are seasoned veterans.

At Bramshill, however, it is all too clear that the trees have met with shocking disaster, and this is the more lamentable because many of them are, or rather were, oak trees. That is to say, they had taken, most of them, many hundreds of years in the growing; they had sent their roots deep down into the soil, slowly and steadily, and unless there is record of their date of planting, some of them may, with scientific accuracy, be described as immemorial. It is because oaks carry with them the idea of sturdy age, of dogged resistance to the storms of a thousand years, because they are so stiff, hard, and intractable, that their downfall is a tragedy. Some yews may have attained age equal to that of any oak, but oaks have been more fortunate in becoming the centres of tradition. For example, that learned old man Dr. Brewer, in the new (1895) edition of his quaint "Dictionary of Phrase and Fable," enumerates no less than sixteen oaks famous in story, the most notable being the Cowthorpe Oak, near Wetherby (described by the "Encyclopædia Britannica" as "a ruin"), which is stated by Professor Burnet to be 1,600 years old, and the Winfarthing Oak, which "was 700 years old at the time of the Conquest." This sounds like poetical exaggeration; but even the staid "Encyclopædia" observes deliberately that "many of the ancient oaks that remain in England may date from Saxon



F. Mason Good.

GAPS IN THE LINE.

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times, and some, perhaps, from an earlier period"; and certainly the Cowthorpe Oak, as described by Evelyn, seems to have altered little in more than two centuries. So when an oak parts company with the soil to which it has been wedded and welded for centuries, a real tragedy of the woodland has been enacted. Far less lamentable is the case of the elms, for, as has been observed already, the elm is but suffering as it might have been expected to suffer when it is torn up by the roots, or when, perhaps, under no stress of wind or duress of any visible kind, a huge limb comes crashing without warning to the earth. That treacherous disposition, combined with a pernicious tendency to throw up suckers from the branching roots, which interfere greatly with agriculture, is the main objection to elm avenues. Stately and beautiful beyond compare, as one may see at Windsor, at

Strathfieldsaye, at Christ Church, Oxford, and at a hundred places besides, the elm avenues always show, by their gaps, the instability of the race from which they spring. So a prostrate elm seems a natural object, and an oak laid low is a far more melancholy spectacle. Nor, in this case, is there the consoling feeling that these trunks of oak, after lying long in the yard in rain and sun, will make oak timber of the very best quality, for the storm felled them when they were full of sap, and they will never show that closeness of grain which is the mark of really old oak. Still, even as they lie, they have their value, for your modern architect must needs be satisfied with oak that has been cut while the sap was up, which is the explanation of the cracks that disfigure many modern buildings planned by architects of the highest eminence. Nay, so often are these cracks seen now, that men have even been heard to say that they are part of the nature of the oak, and lovable for that reason. So the timber will be worth a little money, albeit not nearly so much as if it had fallen in December or January, and that is something of comfort; but it is little, and less than little, in comparison with the loss of beauty that has been incurred; and the real consolation to be obtained from the picture is that there are a good many young trees coming on. They will be growing while we are sleeping, and after we have begun our last sleep.

F. Mason Good.

CYGNUS.



THE ROAD BLOCKED.

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OLD BUILDINGS AT AMESBURY, WILTS.

THE Avon valley of South Wilts possesses many rare and pleasant features, and among not the least interesting to be found there is the variety of ancient buildings to be met with during wanderings from high, wind-swept, grassy downland to thickly-wooded valley beneath. In this district beautiful old churches abound, usually built of stone and squared flints; picturesque villages, the cottages and houses composing them being of infinite variety and design, scarcely ever two houses quite alike, and nearly every one displaying some quaint and delightful feature of its own. Then come the many fine old mansions set along the green banks of gently-flowing Avon's clear stream.

The Wiltshire Avon meets the sea at Christchurch, Hants, and must not be confounded with its Shakespearean rival in Warwickshire. Amesbury is one of the largest villages of the Upper Avon, and may almost be considered a town, as its inhabitants are said to number 1,000. The derivation of the name of Amesbury—Ambresbury, Almesbury, Ambresbiri, for it can be written in all these ways—is thought by some to come from the "choir," or sanctuary, of Aurelius Ambrosius, a Brito-Roman general; by others, from the Hebrew "ambree" (anointed), "biri" (holy ones). This latter name may also be applied to the mystic circle of Stonehenge. The antiquity of Amesbury is

great, dating back to the Pre-historic era, and from the so-called Druidical times to the upheaval of the Reformation it was one of the most important religious centres of Britain. According to tradition, Guinevere fled to this priory and spent her years of repentance within its walls, and at her death Lancelot came with his "fellows," to convey away her body to Glastonbury for interment.

However, my purpose now is more to describe the buildings at present standing than to deal with the history, real or legendary, of Amesbury, about which folios have been, and may still be, written.

Curious specimens of walling are to be found at Amesbury and the surrounding villages. One of the quaint walls here is composed of squared flints, red bricks, white "chalk" bricks, arranged in patterns, and has a thatched coping on the top. The thatched coping is general in this part of the country, and has a delightfully picturesque effect. It frequently surmounts the common mud and chalk wall, which is so usual in South Wilts, and no better, cheaper, or more suitable can be made to surround the quaint old gardens, with their prim grass paths, mulberry trees, and gazebos, to be found in, or outside, nearly every village. The thatching of the walls is, of course, to afford protection from frost and wet, and so long as it is kept in good order, so long the wall remains sound; but if the thatch be neglected, and rain and frost get into the wall, a crack occurs, and the walling crumbles away at once. However, it is equally easily mended. It may be interesting to give an excellent architect's "recipe" for making this wall:

"The foundation should be of stone or brick and carried to a height of 18in. The chalk mud must be wetted and a little straw thrown in to make it bind, and then trodden, as they do grapes, by men with heavy boots; when the composition becomes sticky it should be forked up on to the wall and patted down, and must be put up in layers 1ft. thick, each layer being allowed to dry for twelve hours, or six if the sun be powerful, before the next layer is put on. The price of the mud wall, including labour and material, should be 3s. 6d. for a piece of wall 1ft. high, 1½ft. wide, and 16ft. long."

A splendid old stone and flint wall 12ft. high (as shown in the illustration), with stone coping, surrounds the east of the park at Amesbury. Mr. St. John Hope considers this may be part of the old priory wall which guarded the precinct. The Red House (now a farmhouse) at Amesbury, so called from the red bricks with which it is built, is very charming in its quaint primness, the bricks composing it being small and now covered with grey-toned lichens. At first it must have appeared somewhat out of place, bricks not being the local material. It is a good specimen of about the time of Christopher Wren. The bailiff's house, nearly opposite, is much older, about 1550, and probably was the original farmhouse. It is built of local materials, as all the buildings at Amesbury were, brick only coming in with the Renaissance style of 1720. The local materials are chalk, flint, mud, stone, thatch, slates, and tiles, these latter imported



C. Miles. ROW OF COTTAGES AT WEST AMESBURY VILLAGE. Copyright

from the downs some twenty miles away, stone being added to the better houses. White bricks, made of solid squares of chalk, are a feature in this district. There is a beautiful specimen of the use of these in the old dovecote at Wilsford House, a square building with pointed tiled roof and revolving ladder inside.

The hamlet of West Amesbury has one great ornament in the Manor House, an excellent specimen of Wiltshire flint and stone building. The pattern here is arranged in chequers, the same materials being frequently used, arranged in lines, as at Stockton House, etc. West Amesbury House is of the Tudor period, and has tenth-century beams, similar to those of the church at Amesbury, in its roof, and possesses a monastic doorway. The inside of the house has been much altered and spoilt, but there is still some fine tenth-century panelling left. The rows of thatched cottages, forming the little village street, are picturesque; also a corner house with bay windows. West Amesbury, along with Stonehenge, once formed part of the dowry of the wife of Lord Ferrers of Chartley.

Normanton and Ratfyn Farmhouses are, both of them, fascinating dwellings, Normanton having a delightful garden sloping to the Avon. Ratfyn stands in a high position, and commands a charming view down the river. This latter house has a roof with slates arranged to form a pretty diamond-



C. Miles.

WEST AMESBURY MANOR HOUSE.

Copyright

flowers. It is a shrub to group on the lawn and in places where it is not crowded with neighbouring things.

Catalpa bignonioides.—A small tree of the greatest use for planting by the water-side, but it will do elsewhere. It is shapely, and has large oval-shaped leaves, 6in. long and about as much in width. The flower is not unlike that of the Horse Chestnut, and is lilac in colour, with frilled edges to the petals. These are followed by bean-like fruits, which has given rise to the popular name of the "Bean Tree." The variety *aurea* is one of the finest golden-leaved trees in existence.

White Spanish Broom (*Cytisus albus*).—A beautiful Broom, 6ft. to 7ft. high, and white with flowers in the early summer days. That fine old arboriculturist, Loudon, writes of it, "Placed by itself on a lawn it forms a singularly ornamental plant, even when not in flower, by the varied disposition and tufting of its twiggly, thread-like branches. When in flower it is one of the finest ornaments of the garden."

Cytisus nigricans.—We include this for the sole reason of bringing forward a shrub of which landscape gardeners, apparently, are ignorant, as it is seldom planted and written of. The bright yellow flowers appear in July and August, when few shrubs are in bloom, and it has a value, therefore, for this reason. In "Trees and Shrubs for English Gardens," page 357, it is mentioned: "This is a lovely Broom, so named because it turns black when dried. It should be in the smallest list of beautiful flowering shrubs, and it is singular that it is so seldom seen. The growth is bushy, and smothered with flowers in July and August, sometimes before, and lasts a long while in beauty. Sunshine and



C. Miles.

OLD WALL OF SQUARED FLINTS AND STONE.

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shaped pattern. My illustrations in this article are of a portion of the buildings at Amesbury, and, with the exception of West Amesbury House and the old wall only, are of the farmhouses and cottages. The church, the present dwelling-house, the entrance gates by Webb, and the old lodges, I hope may form material for another article.

FLORENCE CAROLINE MATHILDE ANTROBUS.

IN THE GARDEN.

A FEW BEAUTIFUL TREES AND SHRUBS TO PLANT NOW.

AS we have received several letters in which a desire is expressed for the names of a few beautiful flowering shrubs, it will probably be acceptable if we give a brief list and description of about twelve of the finest flowering shrubs for gardens throughout the British Isles. It is not of course an easy task to select the best, but the following may well be planted where they do not already exist, as possessing many attributes of shrub beauty, and serving as a distinct relief from the monotony of Privet and the reiteration of a few common things.

Berberis stenophylla.—A shrub of rare beauty, and attaining its freest growth on light soils and in the warmer counties. It is a hybrid between the famous Darwin's Barberry and *B. empetrifolia*; the shoots arch over gracefully, and in spring are hidden beneath golden



C. Miles.

THE RED HOUSE, AMESBURY.

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poor soil bring out its finest qualities. One can scarcely say too much in its praise, especially as it blooms at a time when few trees and shrubs are in flower."

Double Scarlet Thorn.—The Thorns are so beautiful generally that it is almost impossible to select one kind and call that the best, but we think no one will dispute the right of the double scarlet variety to the place we give it. It is found in some catalogues under the name of *Crataegus flore pleno coccineo*, and is like the common Thorn, except that the flowers are quite double and brilliant scarlet in colour.

Daphne Mezereum (the Mezeron).—This is to be seen flowering in spring in many a cottage garden. It has not reached the great garden yet, at least, it is not planted so freely as one would expect. At Kew there are, however, several groups of it, as also of the double pure white and the early-flowering variety *autumnalis*. The Mezeron flowers in March before the leaves appear, and the stems are studded with the purplish fragrant petals. It enjoys best a cool, rather moist soil. The berries are red.

Genista athenensis.—This is mentioned because it is so seldom planted, and the fact that its flowering season is late summer should tend to make it

gardens, but we may point out that *Watereri* is a very fine variety. There is a considerable difference in *Laburnums* in gardens, and this is due to the variability of the seedlings. Ask for a good form; some varieties are worthless.

Magnolia conspicua (the Yulan).—This is the Lily Tree of China. It has large, pure white, goblet-like flowers of sweet fragrance, and carried thickly on the dark leafless shoots in spring. It should have a sheltered corner, not from any want of hardiness in the plant itself, but simply to protect its wonderful shower of spotless bloom in the spring. *M. c. soulangeana* has a purplish stain on the florets, and flowers a little later. *M. stellata* is very interesting; a bed of it in March is a joy, and the effect is heightened when blue *Scillas* cluster at the base.

Olearia Haasti.—An evergreen for all gardens. Its foliage is very dense and dark in colour, and the white flower masses almost hide it in the late summer. We saw a large bush of it flowering freely in a London garden, and in dense shade.

The Mock Oranges (*Philadelphus*).—It is difficult to select one of the Mock Oranges for the garden when all are so interesting, but for the average garden *Philadelphus microphyllus* may be named as the kind most likely to please. It is a dense-growing bush, 3 ft. high, and the same across, and has small sweet-smelling white flowers.

Next week the selection will be continued.

FALCONRY: WITH THE MERLINS IN WILTSHIRE.

WE are once more on the war-path, with a considerable array of trained merlins, contributed by different counties in England, Scotland, and Wales, "hacked" under rather different systems by two different trainers, but all ready to do good service on "the plain" if the weather, which has throughout the year been so adverse, will only abate a little of its malignity and give us a fair chance. Five of the chief performers in the projected campaign are shown in the illustration, which will introduce the reader to an apparatus hitherto unfamiliar to most falconers. This is the "pole-cadg," as it may be called, consisting of a wooden bar very much resembling a broomstick, but covered with a double surface of strong green baize, and provided with forked legs attached to it at a short distance from each of its ends, so that it can be either rested simply on the floor when it is hard, or stuck into the ground when it happens to be soft enough to allow the legs to be pushed down into it. Such a contrivance can be more easily carried than the box-cadg generally used for the larger hawks. It can, if necessary, be snatched up quickly in one hand, and then held so that all the hawks on it are always facing the wind in the position which is most agreeable and proper for them. Each hawk is fastened to it by the leash at a suitable distance from his next neighbour, and will stand there as comfortably as on any perch that can be imagined. There is, indeed, so little inducement to jump off from that padded resting-

place that some hawks will often stand there bare-headed—as in the illustration—for some minutes without attempting to take flight.

Let us now take stock of our five little hunters of the air, who, in the course of the next few hours, will have made their *début* on the downs. As it happens, they are all "jacks," or, in other words, males, and therefore a good deal smaller than their sisters, who are not going out this afternoon. At the far end of the pole is Tyee, hanging his head down in that funny way which is usual with all hawks who are not yet used to wearing the hood, and which makes the stranger think that they are either asleep or in a dejected frame of mind. No one has been able to successfully account for the habit, which very soon wears off, and is not apparently indicative of sadness or anything else. Next on the perch, holding his head well up, is his brother, Tommy Green—so called because he wore green jesses while at hack. These two are from a Yorkshire



F. J. Phillips.

THE SHADOWS OF DEPARTING DAY.

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more popular. It grows about 10 ft. high, and is just the shrub for hot and dry soils. Another *Genista* of rare charm is *G. virgata*; its yellow flowers open in June. Groups of these on wet soils are very beautiful. We have several on a piece of quite barren land.

Halesia tetraptera (Snowdrop Tree).—This gets its name from the Snowdrop-like shape of the pearly white flowers. It is an old introduction to English gardens, and blooms in May. The best place for it is on the lawn, where its pretty shape and wealth of flowers can be enjoyed.

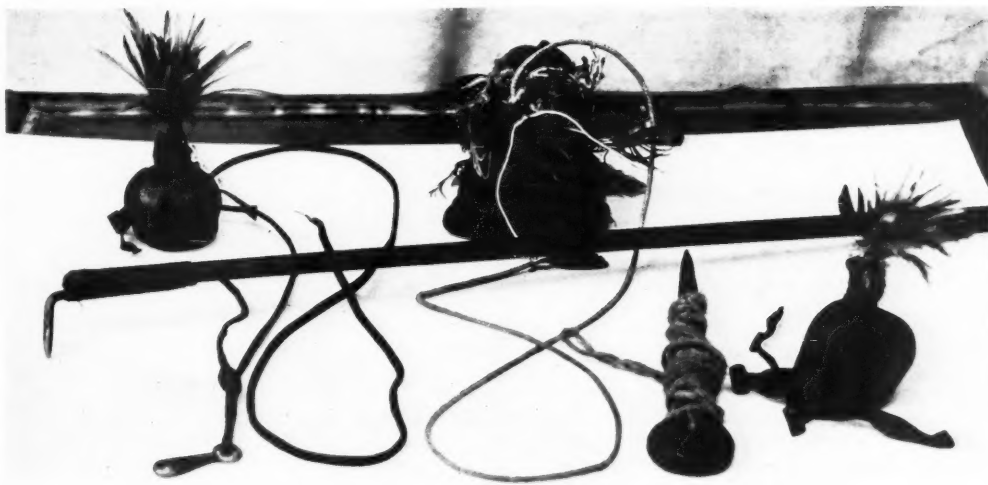
Hibiscus syriacus.—Of the hardy *Hibiscuses* we should plant one variety, and that is the double white (*totus albus*). It is the best of the series for all gardens, whether in town or in country. *Cælestis*, blue, is pretty, but the double white is the freest and most satisfactory in all ways.

Hydrangea paniculata grandiflora.—A noble shrub for a single group on the lawn; its white flower-heads are magnificent, and are familiar to many, as it is planted in most of the large parks, and it is also grown in pots for autumn decoration. If very fine flower masses are desired the shoots must be cut hard back in the winter, and all but three of the strongest removed.

Laburnums.—It is unnecessary to praise the "Golden Rain" of our

eyrie, and have been hacked "at the board," *i.e.*, in perfect freedom, with no man in their company at feeding-times. The two unhooded jacks standing next are from a moor in the Welsh mountains, and were hacked "to the lure," that is, by a trainer who every morning and evening threw down for their delectation some well-garnished lures, and attended while they made their meals. Finally, at the near end stands a bird which, by its colour alone, if by nothing else, is at once distinguishable as belonging to a different class. This is an "adult male," as the naturalists would call him, or, in hawking parlance, a "haggard jack," more than two years old at the very least, and possibly very much older. For not only are most of the long feathers in his wings, which have just come down in the moult, of a dark slaty-blue colour, instead of the chocolate brown of the younger hawks, but also the tail feathers, which have not yet dropped out, are of a black-grey hue, with a broad band of more intense black near the tips. This little fellow came down, hardly a fortnight ago, from the far coast of Ross-shire, where he had been captured in a villainous trap, and was badly injured in one leg. He is, no doubt, in constant pain, and looks far from well or happy. Not a handsome hawk to look at, with too big a head, and rather a round back; but thick-set and broad in the shoulders, and endowed with a temper which has made the work of reclaiming him more ridiculously easy than anyone except his trainer could possibly imagine. We shall see by and by that his prowess in the field—notwithstanding his one nearly useless leg and the disadvantage of the moult—is as superior to that of the eyesses as a race-horse is to a mule.

And now it is time to make a start; but before we go we must pick up the various paraphernalia—technically called "furniture"—which are necessary for use in the field. Some of the more important of these are shown in the illustration; but a word of explanation may be required as to the purposes for which they are employed. First and foremost is the "lure," which figures at the back, as a rather shapeless and uncanny-looking heap. Now, the style of lure generally used for merlins is not exactly the same as that to which the big hawks are called. It consists commonly of a small stout bag of leather or canvas, filled loosely with shot, and attached firmly to a thong, or leash of strong cord, about 1yd. long. To the upper part of it, where the knot of the cord is made, smaller strings are fastened; and by means of these the bare wings of some birds nearly of the same size as larks are affixed in such wise that when the lure is swung or thrown the whole mass, as it passes through the air, resembles to



A HAWK'S FURNITURE.

some extent, no matter how roughly, the body of a bird flying with wings half closed. To some such object all the little hawks have for some days past been well accustomed to come whenever they had the chance. Many of them have been used to dash at it eagerly as it was swung in the air, and even to exhaust themselves in efforts to grasp it as it was whirled about in all sorts of

unexpected directions by the trainer. In the earlier days of their education the small white strings which show so conspicuously on it used to be attached to pieces of food, with which the hawk, when he had succeeded in catching hold of the lure, was allowed to refresh himself. But now they need no such additional attraction to draw them to the desired object, which is no sooner visible to them as they sit on their blocks than they start with lightning speed towards it. The lure, therefore, is the most essential of all the belongings with which a falconer must arm himself when he sallies forth with any long-winged hawk.

In front of the lure is a spare block, small enough to be carried in the pocket, with a spike at the lower end, and a bung nailed on to the top. To this a hawk may at any time be very conveniently fastened, and left in peace on the down—in sight, of course, of some marker or other person who will ward off stray dogs or other enemies—until it is intended to fly him or take him home. Between these two instruments is a more mysterious-looking weapon, made out of the joint of a fishing-rod, with a sharp iron or copper spike or pin projecting at right angles from its thinner end. Of what use



AN AMATEUR'S ASSISTANCE.

can this be? Well, it may often occur—especially in the early part of the season—that a small hawk, having taken so light a quarry as a lark, and knowing full well that, if he likes, he can pick it up and go off with it a mile or so, and then eat it undisturbed, will not allow the falconer to get up to him on the ground, and, reaching out his hand, to take up the lark which he has had

so much trouble to catch. But even such a hawk, suspicious as he may be, and mistrustful of the intentions of the person who approaches, will very often allow that person to come so near that with the end of the stick cautiously advanced he can touch the dead body of the quarry. This done, it is not a difficult matter to drive the spike through the body of the "pelt," and, by means of a steady downward pressure, to pin it to the ground. The attempt to bolt with the quarry, if it is then made, will be ignominiously defeated, and the possible loss of a victorious, but too self-willed, hawk averted. The other objects on the table are a spare leash and two spare hoods. The careful



A POLE-CADGE.

falconer may not be in need of any such things. But carelessness is a vice to which even falconers, as well as other people, occasionally give way; and in the hurry and excitement of throwing off, at an unexpected quarry, there are ample opportunities for dropping the hood or the leash from which the little hawk has been suddenly freed. And when so small a thing as a merlin's hood is once lost on the open plain, he will be either a very lucky or a very patient man who ever finds it again. By the by, the "ring swivels," used for the big hawks, even when made on the smallest pattern, are too clumsy to be conveniently attached and detached to and from the tiny jesses worn by a merlin; and it is better to use a "spring swivel," such as the one shown here at the end of the leash, which can be hooked much more quickly and easily into the diminutive slits on the thin kid glove-leather of which these small hawk's jesses are made.

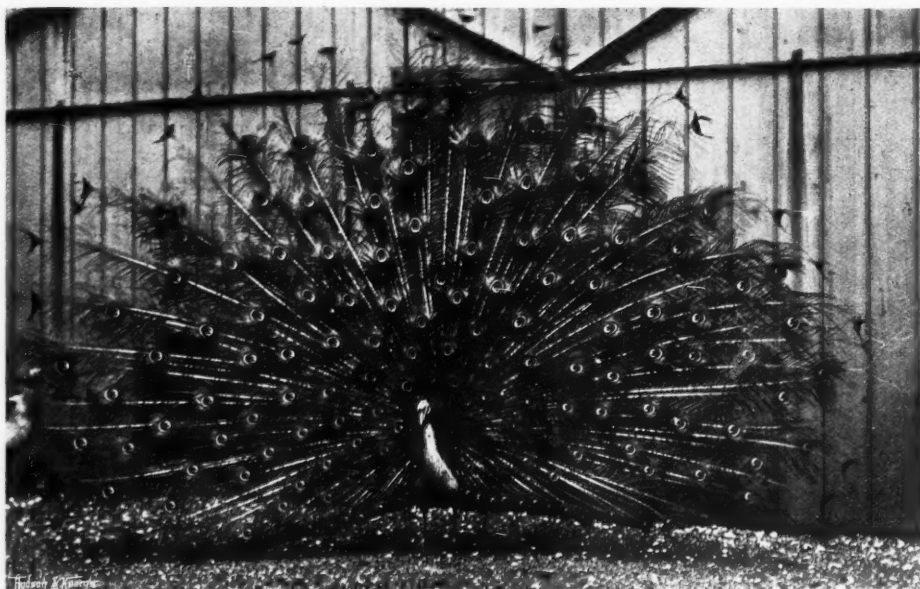
Before setting forth, the three jacks, who are still bare-headed, will probably be hooded up. Not because it would do them any harm to be carried unhooded on the fist; on the contrary, the journey under such conditions—with its attendant small diversions, such as the meeting with strange dogs, noisy children, and bustling motor-cars—would assist in completing the process of manning, so salutary to all hawks not yet entirely reclaimed. But a walk along a Wiltshire road or lane, and, still more, across a Wiltshire field, while on the way to the open downs, is pretty sure to bring us within close sight of numerous larks. At every

one of these all the little hawks are nearly sure to jump off, and the constant disappointment, when they are stopped short in their attempts—for this is not the country required for our sport—is calculated to spoil their tempers, and even, if the annoyance is often repeated, to make them unwilling to start when the time comes that they are expected to do so. Consequently it ought to be a hooded hawk that is attached to the gloved hand of the visitor who has come over to join our party, and who, with a certain veiled apprehension that he may be scratched or bitten, and with a curiously stiff arm and awkward attitude, marches along, eyeing somewhat uneasily his unaccustomed burden. It always seems odd to a falconer that the stranger who is so keen in the cause, with his "Do let me carry one!" should invariably hold his arm in the unorthodox position, as if he were lifting up a fragile object to be examined by some gigantic inspector of curiosities. Such is the attitude of the lady here represented, and of nine out of ten persons of either sex who for the first time are allowed, or requested, as the case may be, to hold or carry a trained hawk. However, we are in a hurry now; and, with the five hawks all accommodated with seats, more or less uncomfortable, on the fist of some one or other of the party, we climb the long hill which separates the snug wooded village from the plateau where the wide undulating plain begins. But of what there occurs—as our allotted space in these columns is limited—we must speak in a future article. E. B. M.

THE PEACOCK'S TAIL.

IF a ballot were to be taken for the purpose of determining which was the most beautiful of the birds, the peacock would undoubtedly hold one of the highest places on the list. But this fame has brought with it a rather unenviable reputation for vanity, resting, it must be admitted, on a good foundation. Thus it is that, whether serving as the butt of the moralist, or a subject for the artist or the taxidermist, this poor bird has been made to suffer more misrepresentation than ordinarily falls to the lot of either bird or mortal. Whilst, to make matters harder, the work of these detractors not seldom appears to receive the sanction of the man of science!

The misrepresentation we complain of rests on a misunderstanding. It is popularly supposed that the magnificent train of the peacock is really its tail, and on this account it is almost invariably, when represented in the familiar expanded form, placed where the tail ought to be—at the end of the body. This mistake would be pardonable if made concerning some rare bird known only from "skins"; but in view of the fact that the peacock is one of our common domesticated birds, it is altogether



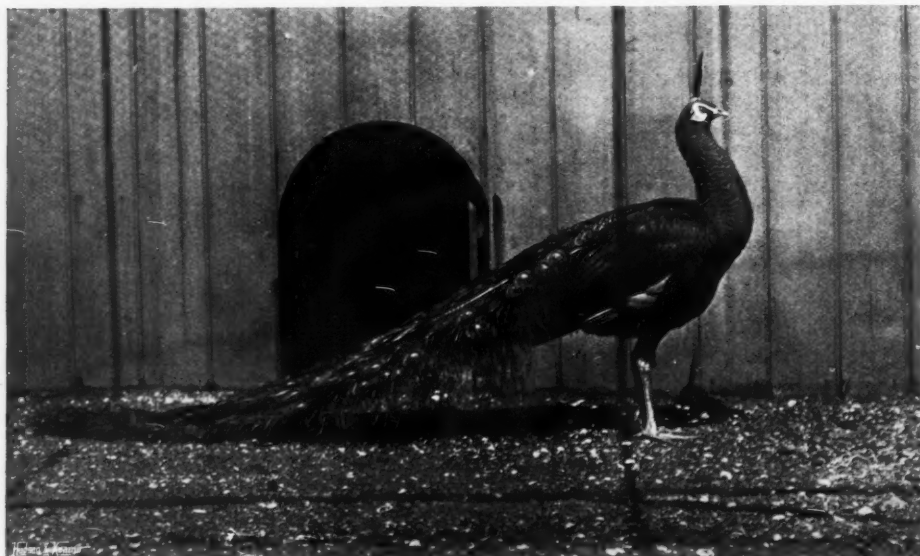
W. P. Dando.

IN HIS GLORY.

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inexcusable. But a very little observation would show that the "tail" of this bird is a quite ordinary kind of tail; at all times concealed from view, save when the bird is moved to make that wondrous display which has been the witness against so many of their inability to interpret what they see. At this time, if the observer will but observe, he will find that the "tail" is used as a support to the train, as may be seen in our illustration.

By the way, it may be remarked that, strictly speaking, the so-called tail of birds is really not the tail, but only a part of that organ. The tail as a whole includes all that portion of the vertebral column which extends from the vertebræ known as the "sacral" to the end of the body. Half of these vertebræ are welded into a single piece with the vertebræ of the loins to form a support for the hip girdle, whilst the remaining half are free, that is to say, are distinct one from another. The last of the series, however, become greatly reduced in size, and, fusing together, form what is known



W. P. Dando.

THE JAVAN PEACOCK.

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W. P. Dando. A PEAHEN FROM JAVA.

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as the ploughshare bone, to serve as a support for the tail feathers, the tail of ornithologists.

These tail feathers have their bases covered above and below by certain long stiff feathers known as the tail coverts, and it is the coverts of the upper surface which, by their excessive development, have given rise to the train which we are now discussing. The number of feathers comprising the train, however, is far in excess of the number of the tail quills, and it would seem that their number has been increased by drawing upon the back feathers. In consequence, then, of the character of this train, it is obvious that when erected it cannot occupy the position which is assigned to it in pictures or stuffed specimens—at the end of the body, as though it corresponded to the tail of the fan-tailed pigeon. On the contrary, if we turn to the living bird we shall find that the whole of the feathers of the back are involved in the formation of this gorgeous fan. The small, highly coloured metallic and sharply-defined feathers of the upper back are raised to form an oval centrepiece and background for the head; whilst the long feathers of the tail proper rise up so as to stand almost vertically beyond the middle of the back—that is to say, so that they entirely conceal the wings when the display is viewed from the front.

Viewed from the side it will be seen that the wings are drooped as in the display of the turkey cock. But the main point to which attention is drawn here is that they lie *behind* the train and not in *front* thereof, as is represented in pictures and stuffed specimens. Those who will, may easily verify these charges by a visit to any picture gallery or museum, and almost, without exception, they will find the facts as here stated.

The wonderful symmetry displayed in the arrangement of the "eye spots" is a further point specially worthy of attention. No less remark-

able is the fashion in which the bottom of the train is finished off. It will be noticed that it may be traced from the level of the breast on either side, outwards and downwards, till finally lost at the outer angle of the fan. If the shafts of the feathers of the whole train be examined, it will be found that they appear to radiate from the oval centrepiece to which we have previously drawn attention. In the stuffed bird, as in pictures, all this symmetry is conspicuous by its absence. Herein the central shield is made to lie horizontally, whilst the lower edge of the fan is made to descend from the top of the back immediately behind the displaced shield. Thus the whole of the body and wings stand out in front of the fan; whilst, as may be seen in the accompanying photographs, only the head and neck are visible from this point of view. The display, as represented by the artist and the taxidermist, is a physical impossibility.

A curious point with regard to the "eye" of the peacock's feather may well find mention here. Many years ago Darwin drew attention to the fact that the central portion of this "eye" is deeply indented, whilst the surrounding zones show traces of similar indentations. Careful investigation convinced him that this peculiar notch is the last trace of the fusion of two originally separate eye-spots, one on either side of the shaft. He was brought to this conclusion by a study of the eye-spots on the tail feathers of the allied peacock pheasants (Polyplectron). He found that whilst in some species the feathers bore two distinct and widely-separate eye-spots, in others they approached one another so as to touch, whilst, finally, in Polyplectron chinquis and P. malaccense they became confluent, though leaving a tell-tale notch at either pole of the elliptical spot. Thus he clearly established a probability that the single eye-spots of the peacock's train were derived by a fusion of a pair of such spots. The presence, however, of only a single notch in the feather of the peacock still required explanation. This he eventually found, by observing that whilst in some species of peacock pheasant the eye-spots were parallel one to another, in others they tended to converge at one end, thus leaving a small notch at the convergent, and a larger notch at the divergent, end. Obviously, by still further increasing the divergence the convergence of the opposite end would be obliterated, and this, he inferred, is what has happened in the case of the peacock's feathers.

Errors of this kind ought not to occur at a time when instantaneous photography has been brought to such a high state of perfection. Nevertheless, they are far too common. On a future occasion we propose to direct attention to a few of the more frequent of these.

Apart from the immediate subject of this article, there is one point about the peacock on which readers and correspondents of COUNTRY LIFE might afford valuable help. This is in regard to the age attained by this bird. One at Warwick Castle—we believe it originally belonged to the late Lord Beaconsfield—is credited with being a centenarian. Are there records about any others, and can they be ascertained? It would be highly interesting if they could.

W. P. PYCRAFT.



W. P. Dando.

SHOWING THE TRUE TAIL.

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BELTON HOUSE, one of Lord Brownlow's noble and beautiful mansions, bears upon its face all the characteristics of the great architect who designed it, as his mind was expressed in his domestic creations. That architect was Sir Christopher Wren, and Belton House is chiefly noticeable, like Marlborough House and other examples from the same hand, for its dignified sobriety of character externally, and its stateliness and good arrangements within. There had been an earlier house at Belton, in which the ancestors of Sir John Brownlow, the builder of the existing mansion, had dwelt. The estate became the property of Richard Brownlow, Esq., Chief Prothonotary of the Common Pleas, who was born in 1553, and lived to be eighty-five. He had been a student of the Inner Temple, and treasurer of that society, and he received his profitable appointment on October 9th, 1591, and held it until his death. It is said to have brought him emoluments amounting to £6,000 a year, which substantial income enabled him to purchase from the trustees of the Pakenham and another

family the Belton estate and other properties in Lincolnshire. The Prothonotary died in London, and his bowels were buried at Enfield, while his body was carried to Belton, where in the church is a figure of him in his official robes.

This notable lawyer had two sons, John and William, both of them baronets, and from the latter was descended Sir John Brownlow, who, in 1690, procured licence to enclose a park in Belton, Londonthorpe, and Telthorpe, about which he built a wall some five miles in circumference. He also built the house which still stands, although it has undergone some modifications. It was erected between 1685 and 1689, when Sir Christopher Wren was in the full tide of his work. It was the period in which St. Paul's was being built, and in which the churches of St. Andrew, Holborn, St. Mary, Lothbury, and St. Mary Abchurch were erected. We cannot withhold admiration from its dignified simplicity of aspect, and there is a great deal in the detail both externally and internally to admire. Sir John Brownlow, who was visited at Belton by William III. during his northern progress after the



death of Queen Mary, spared little in the beautifying of his mansion, but nothing, perhaps, that it contains is so interesting as the famous carvings by Grinling Gibbons. There are no finer examples of the work of the great wood-carver in England, and his masterpieces at Belton have had the advantage of being subjected to restoration by that eminent artist, who followed so much in his footsteps, the late W. G. Rogers. When

at Venice, and Evelyn was so impressed with what he saw that he invited his friends Wren and Pepys to examine the work. He procured permission for it to be shown to the King, and what, perhaps, was of more practical value, he procured from Wren a promise that the young artist should be employed. The promise was fulfilled, and in St. Paul's, and almost wherever Wren worked, Grinling Gibbons worked also. Thus it was that Belton



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FRUIT AND FLOWERS BY GIBBONS IN THE TAPESTRY ROOM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Gibbons wished to devote himself to practising, uninterruptedly, the art he loved, he withdrew from La Belle Sauvage Yard, where he had lived, to a lonely house at Deptford, which had the unexpected advantage of bringing him into touch with John Evelyn, who dwelt near by at Sayes Court, and who introduced him to Sir Christopher Wren. He was discovered reproducing in wood Tintoretto's great picture of the Crucifixion

House was adorned. It would be impossible to imagine any more successful reproductions of plant, flower, fruit, and bird forms than are seen in these marvellous works. There is the very touch of Nature in the carvings upon the panels of the Chapel gallery, and the festoons and wreaths of the Drawing-Room, with the dead game, and the floral richness, are truly marvellous illustrations of the extraordinary skill of the great wood-carver.



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THE PRIVATE GALLERY OF THE CHAPEL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

A later Sir John Brownlow, who was created Viscount Tyrconnel in 1718, and who died in 1754, made many changes at Belton House. It was he who began the fine library, and laid out the beautiful formal gardens, which no longer remain. Perhaps to his time we may ascribe the noble hammered gates of the west forecourt and other external adornments. He built the great triumphal arch near the eastern gate, which is known as the Belmont Tower, and commands a magnificent view from its crest. This Sir John Brownlow left no children, and his sister Anne, who was his heiress, conveyed Belton to her husband, Sir Richard Cust, second baronet. Their son was Sir John Cust, born in 1718, who represented Grantham in Parliament from 1743 until his death in 1770, and was Speaker of the House of Commons from 1761 to the same year. He assumed office in

the first Parliament of George III., and held it at a stormy time in Parliamentary history, when Wilkes was thrice returned for Middlesex and was expelled and replaced. Wilkes and his friends made Sir John Cust an object of bitter invective, and Wraxall says the chair was never filled with less dignity or energy. Walpole, on the other hand, says that it was well filled, and certainly Sir John Cust earned Royal favour. He wore himself out in the toils of his office, and his son, Sir Brownlow Cust, was created, in 1776, Baron Brownlow of Belton, expressly in recognition of his father's Parliamentary services.

The first Lord Brownlow employed James Wyatt to alter and improve Belton House. A desire for change had passed over the country, and there was scarcely a county or a large



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MASTERPIECES OF GRINLING GIBBONS IN THE CHAPEL GALLERY. "COUNTRY LIFE."

town in England which did not exhibit some public or private building due to that active architect. He built Heaton House, near Manchester, for Sir Thomas Egerton, Fonthill for Mr. Beckford, and added two wings to Chiswick House, the Duke of Devonshire's suburban place. At Belton House he removed the cupola and some balustrading, made the drawing-room more lofty, and effected some other changes. The splendid character of the plaster-work will be noticed, and, however much we may regret that Wren's structure should have been modified, we must recognise much that was good in the work of Wyatt. We remarked, in describing the gardens of this splendid mansion some time since, that the development of the estate, including its gardens and sylvan beauties, could be traced through the modifications introduced by its successive owners. There is excellent character in the house generally, charming picturesqueness in its

courtyard, and lavish beauty in its iron grilles and many of its details.

There are many interesting portraits at Belton, including examples of Lely, Reynolds, Romney, and Gainsborough, although some of the pictures have been removed to Lord Brownlow's other beautiful place, Ashridge, in Hertfordshire. But, as we have said, internally nothing is so interesting as the beautiful work of Gibbons, exemplified in the cedar panelling of the Chapel, the pendant groups, flowers, fruit, and game of the Drawing-Room, and other examples, not excelled, if they are equalled, by anything from the same hand that can be shown at Blenheim, Cassiobury, Houghton, or other great houses. There are, of course, at Belton great and noble surroundings, not the old formal gardens that were laid out there, but more modern parterres set like jewels in their green framework of





THE WEST FORECOURT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

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grass, and with a rich background of evergreen and deciduous trees. Beauty reigns everywhere, and taste and judgment preside over its manifestations. Belton House is thus, from every point of view, a notable example of the great love for country life and beauty which is so strong in Englishmen.

MY FIRST IBEX AND MY LAST BEAR.

IN the long interval of nearly twenty-eight years between these two events I had many and varied experiences in the world of sport, did many a long tramp and stiff climb, and brought to bag a fair number of ibex and other fine animals of the Himalayas, and many a bear. Yet the two incidents of which I shall write were, in my experience, peculiar, each in its own way. And if the one stands out clear in the memory from the more recentness of the occurrence, the other remains equally vivid from its very remoteness. For first impressions are strongest, and most abiding, and for me, I fear, that unwelcome time has arrived when the mind goes back to these with far greater accuracy than the events of later date. So it is that I can remember, as it were yesterday, my first journey to Kashmir, every one of the eleven marches from Murree to Baramoolah, whence the remainder of the journey to Srinagar was done by boat, the paddling and towing and poling up the river, the camp in the Moonshee Bagh, and all the preparations for the fresh start from there. And what keen interest there was in every detail, what delightful anticipations, what extravagant dreams as to the possibilities of the bag! In going for ibex in Kashmir, the first thing to be done is to secure a good nullah, or valley; once your tent is pitched in the nullah, the etiquette of sport secures it for you until you leave, and, conversely, you may not interfere with the possession of another man. This arrangement often entails a long and desperately cold wait until the snow has cleared off the steep slopes sufficiently to allow of

moving about or stalking. For there is usually such a rush of sportsmen eager to secure good ground that one must go early, and march his hardest too, if he would not be cut out. Not unfrequently there may be quite a race for some far-famed nullah, and many tricks are practised to outwit the other man, passing him in the dark, or sending on a small tent with lightly-laden coolies to be pitched in advance. And in the end a battle royal between the two sahibs has been known, the nullah being appropriated by him who had the power.

My nullah was to be the Sukuar just over the Zoji La Pass at the head of the Scinde Valley. This and also a good shikari—one Aziz Khan—had been strongly recommended by a friend of great experience, and I was content. This Sukuar is a very high, and consequently very late, nullah, and I found there was no competition for it so early in the season. So by advice of Aziz Khan I was induced first to try another place called Ranga, lying a few miles only short of the pass, a sharp look-out being kept meantime for any other sahib who might come along with felonious intent. And I may say at once that these precautions eventually failed. I was outwitted, and the Sukuar went to another man—a globe-trotter too, which made it worse. However, I had my sport in Ranga, as I will now relate.

We were not long in spotting ibex, one fine-looking old male, his horns with a grand curve to them, a sure sign of length, accompanied as usual by a following of half-a-dozen females and youngsters. At first it looked, at least to my eye, as if the stalk might be easy enough, but a nearer approach and closer inspection of the ground showed a very contrary situation. The herd were on a sort of small promontory, jutting out with a downward slope from a high precipice, humanly speaking inaccessible, and all the other sides of this promontory to the ground below appeared to be perpendicular cliffs. These cliffs were pronounced by Aziz Khan, who said he knew all that ground perfectly, to be impossible of ascent, and he declared there was nothing for it but to wait till the herd should move. So we settled ourselves to watch, and, as will be seen, I found in all conscience plenty of time to admire my friend's horns through my field-glasses before we left our place of vantage. Towards



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THE ROOF OF THE GREAT HALL AT BELTON HOUSE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



Copyright BELTON HOUSE: THE CARVINGS OVER THE HALL MANTEL. "C.L."

evening I sent for some food and blankets, and the herd showing no intention of moving, we prepared to settle for the night. But this was not so easy, for not a square yard of level ground could we find anywhere near, and I would not hear of moving far. So we had in the end to content ourselves with an old sheep-track, about 1ft. wide—really a pretty precarious bed, for the general slope of the mountain-side was alarmingly steep, and no saying, or seeing, where one might pull up if he once began to roll.

Next morning the herd was still there, and seemed quite content to remain, there being a little grazing on the promontory and very little elsewhere. During this day another fine ibex appeared, and after a sort of stage-fight with the big fellow of the herd—a graceful performance, but quite lacking, it seemed to me, in strenuous purpose—it joined in with the rest quite amicably, this now making two pairs of horns for the walls of my bungalow. Still they would not move, and night again came on; and yet one more day we spent in the same manner, watching and waiting. Then I put my foot down, and insisted that we must make the attempt to scale the cliff next morning. Aziz Khan said that was impossible, but I was firm, and we started. It certainly proved a bad climb, the rifle and alpenstocks having to be passed up from one hand to another, each of us climbing in turn from point to point with mutual assistance, and in many parts the hold for hands and feet, or rather toes, being very precarious. Indeed, if it had not been for a coolie we had with us, the best cragsman I ever saw, a man who would spring lightly to some mere knob of rock caring nothing for the precipice below him, and from there help us two past some difficult part, I doubt if we should have

done it. And Aziz Khan, good man though he was, kept protesting that nothing would induce him to go back the same way. However, the top was reached all right at last, and then the stalk was very easy. I got a shot at 50yds., and, trembling with triumph and delight, I saw my first ibex struggling on the ground. It should have been an easy matter to bag the other big male also, but in these first adventures of youth excitement has to be reckoned with. With heart thumping, pulses throbbing, and every limb in a state of tremor quite beyond control, I blazed away two or three shots; but the rifle went off anyhow, and I only succeeded in disgracing myself by shooting a young one, which happened to be somewhere in the vicinity of the other male; at least, I believe so, for I could be certain of nothing just then. After skinning and beheading our prize, the question of getting back to camp was naturally our first care, and as darkness would be on us in an hour, and snow had begun to fall, and we had no blankets, this soon became acutely pressing; but no way could we find which looked at all possible, the cliff by which we came up being utterly scouted by all. So it ended in our having to make the best of it for the night where we were. Most fortunately there was one tree on our small plateau, and beneath this we made our bivouac, and from its branches were able to make a fire. Bits of the ibex, cut small, run on to a stick and roasted in the fire, formed our supper, and with this the inner man was sufficiently comforted; but with no covering, and snow or sleet falling, it may be believed there was not much sleep to be had, and with one side warm and the other deadly cold alternately throughout the night, the experience was unpleasant enough. Yet the success of the day had the necessary soothing effect, and the hours soon passed. Our mothers would tell us our "death of cold" must be the certain result of such foolish recklessness, yet somehow strength to withstand these things comes with the occasion, and we are none the worse.

In the morning, as we were again searching for a practicable way down, a coolie appeared from my camp. He was, of course, hailed with acclamation, as he would be able to point out the way. But he declared the sahib could not go back the way he had come, and that we had better return by our own cliff. This we would not hear of, and made the man show us his route. This we found, if not easy, at least possible, and soon arrived safely in camp. And we were not a bit too soon in getting off the mountain, for the snow came on in real earnest, and I was completely snowed up for two whole days in my tent. Two red bears and one black were subsequently added to the bag on this trip, and I returned, after being twenty days out, content, on the whole, with my first experience, thoroughly bitten with the game, and full of plans for next year. Aziz Khan, in bidding me farewell, said: "Salaam, sahib, I hope your honour will come many times to this country, but don't ask me to be your shikari again. I must think of my family." Years afterwards, I met a nephew of his, and he told me that his uncle still was wont to dilate on our adventure with my first ibex. Now for the bear incident.

This is a much shorter story, and interesting chiefly on account of the, to me, unique manner of his death, the mystery connected with certain shots fired at him, and his behaviour under the fire. It was in a part of the Himalayas not famed for its red bears, and I had only promised myself a couple during the trip. Time was getting on, and I had seen no bears, and very few fresh tracks. The shikaries, too, were poor, and inspired one with no confidence, and so I was getting pretty hopeless. Well, as so often happens, just at this stage a bear was seen when least expected, while I was out for an evening stroll, looking for a pheasant for the pot. I was high up on one side of a broad valley, and the bear appeared on the other about the same level. He had just emerged from jungle on to snow, which

filled a side nullah running down to the stream of the main valley and towards me. His intention evidently was to cross this to the jungle on the opposite side, and as the snow was not more than 20yds. wide I had to be sharp. The distance was so great—I put it at 400yds., and could not possibly make it less than 350yds.—that at first I thought it useless to try; but reflecting that there would be little chance of seeing my friend again, I quickly made up my mind, and got into position for a shot. Now this is what happened. He stopped on the snow, and made a fine target. I fired, and down he came, sliding down the hillside for about 20yds. Here he recovered, and stopped still. I fired again, and this time he rolled down about a similar distance, pulling up against a small birch tree. I thought he was quite done for, but after swaying about a bit, he started to crawl to the thick jungle only a few yards away. So I fired again twice, with no apparent effect, and then he disappeared. It was getting dusk, and there was little time to get on his tracks before dark, especially as there was a torrent in the valley bottom, a thousand feet below, which we were by no means sure of being able to cross. However, we started, and, scrambling down as fast as the ground would permit, found a crossing, and after a stiff climb soon came on the spoor. This was easy to follow, for there was a good deal of blood, and weakness had forced the bear to slide in some of the steeper places. So it was not long before we came on him. He had, I think, been lying down, but at the moment I saw him—about 50yds. off—he had raised himself on his fore legs, and was looking round at us. This was perfectly distinct. I then took a careful shot, and he collapsed in his tracks, just as might have been expected. Nothing extraordinary in all this, the reader will think, and so thought I. But when we came to skin him, in good light, next morning, there was only one bullet to be found in him. This had gone in at the junction of neck and shoulder, run

up the neck, and broken one jawbone, a number of pieces of lead being found scattered among the teeth. Not another hole in the skin, or contusion on any part of the body. To make doubly sure, I had the skin pegged out in front of my tent while drying, and went down on hands and knees and examined it with the greatest minuteness, but with no other result. Now, which of the shots was it which hit? At first the vivid picture of the bear dropping to the last shot was so strong in my mind that the idea of that being a miss did not occur to me, and yet one of the first shots must also have hit, because of the blood in the tracks. This is what impelled me to search the skin so carefully, although I had really had ample demonstration during the skinning process. Of course the only reasonable solution of the problem is that the first shot did the business, otherwise the bear would have made off into the jungle at once. Then how about the roll down hill at the second shot, and the collapse at the last one? I can only conclude that fright must have been the cause of both. The second bullet may have hit a stone somewhere near his head, causing a start and a slip, weakness preventing him regaining his equilibrium till pulled up by the tree. Then at the end, our sudden appearance and the blaze and noise of the shot must have been too much for the poor fellow, and he simply collapsed from nervous shock.

It all seems simple enough explained in this way, yet I think all who have had sporting experience will admit the case is a very unusual one. It must, for instance, have been remarked how often animals display the very reverse of this behaviour, a wounded animal being actually harder to kill than one previously untouched. I have often, of course, seen bears, and other animals too, take many shots after the first before being finally settled, but I have come across none but this one which appeared to be in the least affected by anything but the hard hitting.

THE SECRETARY BIRD.

UP-COUNTRY in South Africa one of the most familiar birds of the open veldt is the curious secretary bird, which is to be seen stalking about the grass plains beyond the Orange, or the Karoos of the Cape Colony, with a severe and solemn air of dignity very interesting to behold. This bird has long been known to the colonists of South Africa and to travellers, and from very early days attracted the notice of those interested in natural history. So far back as 1769 a living example was to be found in the collection of the Prince of Orange in Holland, and a pair were brought alive to England in 1770. During the eighteenth century many of the Dutch colonists of South Africa seem to have been in the habit of maintaining these birds about their farmhouses in a state of domestication; here they slew stray snakes and kept order among the poultry, an occupation which, by reason of their terrifying appearance—for they are by nature true birds of prey—they may very well have fulfilled. This custom is not now very common among the Boers, but here and there a tame secretary bird is still to be seen stalking gravely about some lonely back-country farmstead.

Why the habit of maintaining tame secretary birds has fallen into comparative desuetude it is hard to say; possibly the Boers have made the discovery that the bird is not such an ardent devourer of serpents as they formerly accounted him. For, although he does occasionally kill and eat a snake, the secretary is by no means in the habit of waging that fierce and unceasing war of extermination against poisonous reptiles with which he was once popularly credited. Still, the *Slang-vreeter* (serpent-eater), as the Boers call him, does at intervals kill and devour snakes; he is as useful as well as a distinctly ornamental bird, and he is very properly protected in various parts of South Africa by laws which impose penalties on his wanton destroyers.

With the British South African farmer of the present day, however, the secretary is by no means so popular a bird as he still is among the Dutch. The average Dutch Africander cares nothing for sport with the shot-gun, while the British colonist, who finds excellent employment for the fowling-piece among the innumerable game birds of the country—francolins, bustards, quail, guinea-fowl, and so forth—regards the secretary bird with a deep-rooted suspicion, for which, I am afraid one must confess, he has strong reasons. This tall, swift, and powerfully-armed bird, with his accipitrine characteristics, his strong and cruel beak and clawed feet, is, in fact, charged by most South African sportsmen of the present day with slaying more harmless and necessary game birds—especially the defenceless young—than he does snakes. I am afraid that the charge is a true one, and that the bird does undoubtedly destroy during the season many young game birds and not a few leverets. The South African hare, however, is, for various reasons, by no means so popular an animal as his cousin of England, and his demise is, therefore, not overmuch lamented.



H. Moore.

THE SECRETARY BIRD.

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I have examined, at different times, the contents of the stomachs of two secretary birds. Of these, the first contained one small non-poisonous snake, the remains of a small bird, and a few lizards. The stomach of the second bird, which was run down by dogs on a broad plain of British Bechuanaland, held the following items: One small tortoise (still alive), a mouse, four lizards, and a quantity of locusts. That the secretary does, when hungry and hard put to it for food, occasionally attack, vanquish, and devour poisonous snakes of considerable size is undoubted. But this is by no means so frequent an occurrence as the old naturalists would have us suppose. The bird fully understands his risk in these encounters, and takes his measures accordingly. He attacks the snake in a very wary manner, feinting with his wings and waiting his opportunity. When that comes, he buffets the snake heavily with his wings, strikes it with his strong feet, and, having partially disabled it, breaks its vertebra

with a blow or two of its formidable beak, or pierces its brain. According to Mr. Atmore, an English colonist long resident in South Africa, and a very careful observer and collector of facts in ornithology, if the snake strikes so much as a feather of the bird's plumage during the fight, the secretary plucks it out instantly, knowing, I suppose, by instinct, that if the reptile's poison once enters his system he is doomed.

The secretary bird is far more of a pedestrian than a flyer, ranging all day in search of food over a large expanse of country. It seldom takes to wing from choice, and I doubt very much whether it soars at all to any considerable height, as some writers have supposed. I have watched these birds very closely in various parts of South Africa, yet I never saw one take any lofty or prolonged flight. Even when pursued on horseback or by dogs, they prefer to trust as far as possible to their long legs and their amazing running powers. When very hard pressed, and exhausted by their exertions in running, they take short, shallow flights, and quickly come to earth again. It was just in this way that the bird which I have mentioned as killed by dogs in British Bechuanaland was slain. Our pack of waggon and sporting dogs were ranging some way in front of us, when they came upon one of these birds. Regardless of our cries, they gave chase, and soon got far ahead of us. For two miles or more they ran the bird, which displayed extraordinary swiftness. Presently, as they gained on it, the secretary flew up into the air, and took a short flight of a couple of hundred yards. As it came to earth again the dogs renewed their efforts, and after two or three such flights and more running, the bird became completely exhausted, and was run into and killed. Any other bird possessing fair powers of flight would have sailed clean away and escaped easily. The late C. J. Andersson, one of the most skilful and observant ornithologists that ever visited South Africa, fully confirms these impressions of mine as to the reluctance of this bird to take any prolonged flight; and if it migrates from one part of the country to another, I am convinced that the secretary bird does so by means of its powers of pedestrianism and not by flight.

As a matter of fact, these birds form a strong attachment to particular localities, and a pair of them, having driven out any rival or rivals of the same species, will use the same nesting-place year after year. The nest is placed in a bush or low tree, usually in the middle of thorny and impenetrable thickets, and is formed of sticks and clay lined with wool and hair. The eggs, two, or

occasionally three, in number, are about the size of a large turkey's; they are of a dirty white hue, lightly spotted with minute markings of brownish red, and towards the obtuse end more thickly blotched with markings of the same colour. In some few cases, however, the egg may be dull white with scarcely any markings; at all events, an egg from the Mooi River, in Natal, shown to me a year or two since, which I believe to have been a secretary's, was almost spotless.

These curious birds are characterised, especially in the young state, by an extraordinary brittleness of the legs. In the young birds, when in captivity, the legs are often broken by what seems the merest and most trifling accident—a trip or a slight stumble. Mr. Layard instances the case of a young secretary he was rearing, which trod in a small wooden bowl sunk in the ground, and falling, broke a leg and a wing. Both were carefully spliced, but the bird died in ten days. Even full-grown birds in the wild state will occasionally snap a leg when running in uneven ground.

There have been various legends as to the origin of the secretary bird's European name. There can be no doubt that it first arose from the dark plume feathers placed at the back of the head, which gave some observant Dutchman the idea of the protruding quill stuck behind the ear of a clerk or secretary. The plumage of this striking bird, which is now, after infinite debate among naturalists, usually placed among the accipitrine forms, is extremely handsome. The head, neck, breast, and upper feathering are an elegant bluish grey, slightly tinged with rufous on the wing coverts. The plume feathers, which grow in pairs, are ten in number, the short ones grey and black, the longer and lower ones all black. The quill feathers are black, as are the thighs, the latter with a tint of brown. The throat is white; the under part of the tail is also white, tinged with russet. The long tail feathers are varied in black and grey, with white extremities. The beak is very strong and well arched; the eye, thoroughly that of a raptorial, fierce and menacing. The legs, cere, and naked part of the face are of an orange-yellow. In length these great birds extend to four feet, of which the long legs and neck account for the major portion. Naturalists place the secretary bird in a genus of its own and term it *Serpentarius secretarius*. The bird has a wide range in Africa, and is found as far north as Abyssinia. Major Moore's excellent photographs were taken from specimens at Groote Schuur, Rondebosch, South Africa. H. A. BRYDEN.

HUNTING NOTES.

NOW do stand up and look; there is a country worth your coming all the way from London to see." Thus Dick Christian when he showed Mr. Dixon Ranksborough Gorse. As it was then, so it is now. There is always a chance of seeing the run of the season over this district. Ah, how easy it is to write of such gallops, but how difficult to ride them!

A single hesitation, an error of judgment, and the chance of a lifetime, perhaps, is gone. Listen to the story of the run of the week, and you may take the word of one who knows every yard of the ground that it was, probably, the run of the season. The story was told me by a good man to hounds, riding a horse that has twice won point-to-point honours. "We had had an hour's pleasant hunt from the Gorse, and I had luckily changed on to the old horse. In spite of his two seasons he tried to buck me off. It was an outlying fox. I did not actually see him jump up, but I saw the hounds begin to run hard, and made a dash for the front. From the first it was hard riding, but I thought after the first turn the point was the Punchbowl. One ought not to think, I know, but still, with fences as they are now, a little skirting is allowable. Once hounds seemed to waver, but—and here is the advantage of having a huntsman who is always with his hounds—Thatcher never gave them time to make a check of it, and he just held them on to the line. Then there was the road to cross, but when I saw hounds again they were fairly running past Burdett's Covert, where the leaders had the advantage of a pause.

"Once more I cast forward over the road, and found hounds running on. Nor did I get a pull till Thorpe Trussells was reached, and badly I wanted it. The distance was nearly seven miles, and the time not much over three-quarters of an hour. Good enough at any time, but a feat to talk of at this time of year. Still hounds ran on, and I am sure that they changed at Barsby. At all events, I had to take to the road, and, as it seemed to me, but three or four went on with them—Thatcher was one, and I think Mr. Hugh Owen another. The hounds were stopped before entering Barkby Holt, as the huntsman felt sure he was after a fresh fox. This line was over almost the cream of two countries, and from point to point covered nine miles in a straight line. At least, so I make it on my map. The course was a wonderfully straight one as runs go. Up to Leesthorpe the fox inclined to the right, and after that to the left. The number of coverts he passed and left shows that he had a point in his mind, probably either Thorpe Trussells or Ashby Pastures."

The writer is discontented because he did not see the whole, but as a matter of fact nothing but judgment, some luck, and a good horse would have carried him as far as he did go. I have often observed that in recalling the impressions of a run afterwards the early scenes are much more clearly imprinted on our minds than the later ones. The fact is, while the horse is fresh and we are with hounds all is comparatively easy, but if the time comes when

it is a question, "How much longer can I keep going?" the attention is fixed on the next fence, and the instinctive registration of landmarks ceases. It has been said, by the way, that it is wiser to ride a tired horse at the fence where it is sound and high. It may be so, but which of us does not look for the easy places? No one who has not ridden a game but half-beaten horse in a flying country can have any idea of the places you can scramble through.

Seven and a-half couple of the Quorn pack, slipping away from the main body, had a run which, if not so fast as that of the Cottesmore just related, was also straight, and notable from the fact that the little pack hunted themselves. Perhaps there is no prettier sight than to see hounds when they are hunting a line by themselves and one feels no call to stop them. That is one of the comforts of Leicestershire. No one is responsible but the staff, and if one sees a pack hunting one just keeps one's eye on them quietly till they are stopped, or till the main body joins them. It may be fancy, but it always seems as though hounds thus hunting alone have a sense of responsibility, and sometimes seem to enjoy their temporary independence.

Leesthorpe Hall is to be let. Given the necessary means to live in it, a better hunting centre could hardly be. It is picturesque in its surroundings, too. Of course it is a house that has many associations with the past history of the Hunt.

The Master of the Pytchley, Lord Annaly, has determined not to hunt in the open during the wet weather. It is rumoured that the Master of the Quorn has the same self-denying ordinance under consideration. No one will complain if the farmers wish it. Yet I believe, honestly, that horses do very little damage to grass pastures in the autumn. In the spring, of course, it is a different matter. Yet I recollect Lord Lonsdale postponing Kirby Gate for a fortnight (in 1897, I think) on account of rain. This wet weather is certainly bad for foxes; most of the earths are uninhabitable and drains not to be thought of. The consequence is that a fox once started has to stay above ground. His usual refuges are closed to him, and a very large number are killed. We must not form, then, too high an expectation for the future from the very satisfactory tale of noses on the kennel door after cub-hunting. In most countries young hounds have been well blooded, which is a small matter, but they have very often had the best of their foxes after a useful hunt, which is a very important thing. Indeed, I have never, in a fairly long experience, known hounds enter so well, and with the five packs I have seen out it would be difficult for anyone not really acquainted with the individuals of the pack to tell the new entry from the old hounds, so well are the former running up with the pack.

I spent a short time of leisure the other day looking at the Culm Valley foot-harriers at work. These hounds were beagles originally. I am coming round to Mr. Bryden's view, that even for a foot pack harriers are better than beagles. If the former are strictly hunted on foot they do not go so very much faster than beagles, and they want less help. The whole secret of good

sport with beagles is to handle them sharply, like foxhounds, whereas harriers are better let alone, and this plan of hunting gives more sport to the followers on foot. For it is obvious that no one will go out hunting on foot except for the love of hound work.

After all we are to keep Mr. Sanders with the Devon and Somerset.

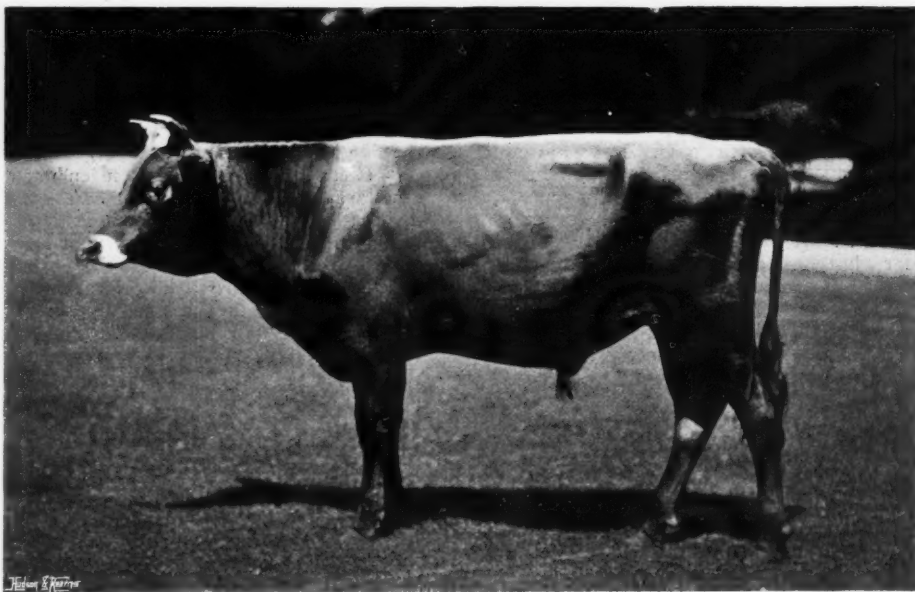
He is to have the increased guarantee to meet the larger expenses, which are in a measure the result of his own success in hunting the country. The deer have been well killed down, yet is there an ample stock, I am told, for next season, and plenty of work in store when hind-hunting begins this coming Saturday.

BUTTER-MAKING IN ESSEX.

TO many people it may sound incredible that Spains Hall, the residence of Mr. Ruggles - Brise, which is not more than about sixty miles from the Bank of England, should nevertheless be eleven miles distant from the nearest railway station. So it is, however, and what that means to the district can be easily imagined. There are rustics living in the pretty thatched cottages on the way who have never been in London, never even seen a railway train. It was

an instructive drive from Dunmow through country wearing the faded and dishevelled brown of the wettest autumn on record. There still (on Saturday, October 24th) were labourers engaged in the work of harvesting the black discoloured sheaves. On some fields the grain is still out, and never will be gathered. There are bits not even cut, and many farmers have turned their poultry out to make the most of it. Here and there the soaking stubbles have been desperately ploughed for the winter crops, though in a most unfit condition for the purpose. All the progress that had been made up to 1900 has collapsed, and the dreariest of outlooks and utter discouragement of agriculture have prepared at least one class to listen eagerly to the hopes held out by Mr. Chamberlain's proposal.

Except for the badness of the year, it would have been gratifying to examine the work done on the estate of Mr. Ruggles-Brise. He has about 2,000 acres on hand, and the profits shown in his annual balance-sheets go to prove that with average weather farming may be profitably conducted under disheartening modern conditions. There are two features to



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YEARLING BULL DASLIER.

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which we would direct attention. First there is the flock of Suffolk sheep. Like everything else, sheep have suffered from the excess of moisture, and we regretted to see the number of temporary lameters in the fine level flock. Of course it was easy to explain. In long-continued wet weather the feet become softened, and therefore the more liable to get thorns or stones into them. But, at any rate, continuous rain makes the kind of weather in which sheep fare worst.

As a farmer's breed the advantages claimed for Suffolk sheep are as follows: First they are prolific, thirty lambs per score of ewes being a frequent average. They mature early, being fit for the butcher if well grazed at from nine to twelve months old, and the ram lambs are so forward at seven or eight months that the majority of breeders use them in preference to older sheep, though, as we had occasion to point out not long ago, some of the best breeders are opposed to this practice. The sheep are hardy, and able to get a living anywhere in reason, while the mutton is of the highest quality, and contains a large proportion of lean meat.

In the report of the "flock" test for 1890 it was stated of the Suffolks that "they have certainly made a remarkable record of weight, and the highest percentage of carcass to live weight—74.91—of any sheep in the table." A few of their recent achievements bear out the argument. In 1899, at the Smithfield Club Show, the Prince of Wales's Challenge Cup for the best pen of sheep or lambs in the show was awarded to a pen shown by the Earl of Ellesmere. The same exhibitor took



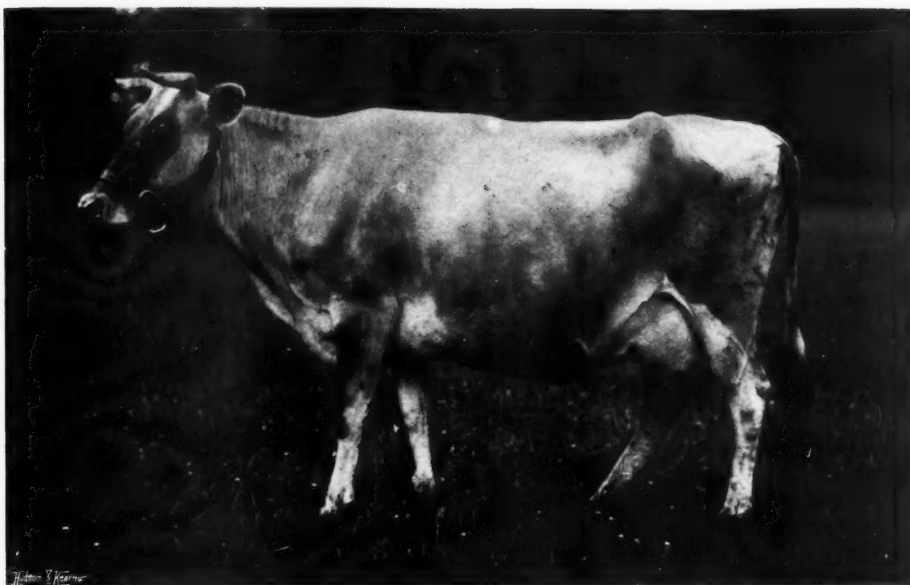
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THE JERSEY HERD IN THE PARK.

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second prize at the Edinburgh meeting of the Highland and Agricultural. In 1900 the Earl of Ellesmere again won the Prince of Wales's Challenge Cup at Smithfield with a pen of wethers. At the Scottish National Fat Stock Show, both in 1901 and 1902, the championship went to Suffolks. Add to all this the fact that they do uncommonly well in this part of Essex, and it will cease to be a cause of wonder that they form a profitable branch of farming at Spains Hall.

But even more interesting than the sheep is the herd of Jerseys. They are not primarily kept for show, though we need scarcely mention that Mr. Ruggles-Brise has exhibited with distinguished success. The breeding is of the best, the foundation having been laid seventeen years ago by acquisitions from the herd of the late Colonel Russell of Stubbers Romford, the bulls being mostly obtained from the island. Subsequently the herd has been from time to time recruited by purchases from the late Lord Braybrooke, Lord Rothschild, the late Mr. Beadel, and the late Mr. Ind. But the practice is now to breed wholly on the estate, a bull being now and then acquired to introduce fresh blood. The cows are of medium size, dark fawn or grey in colour, and uniform in



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FANCY.

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entirely altered by the circumstances. Here it has been found by experience that the better and more economical plan is to allow the cream to ripen, and then take it off by means of Jersey Creamers.

Very great care is taken to secure an even temperature while churning, with the result that the butter is fairly certain to come in about twenty minutes. The temperature is 58deg. in summer and 60deg. in winter. From the milk of his Jerseys Mr. Ruggles-Brise calculates to get a pound of butter for every two gallons, a result which, of course, it would be hopeless to expect from the milk of shorthorns.

At this time of day few people who are interested doubt the pre-eminence of the Jersey as a butter cow, but if there are any who do so, they can be confidently recommended to study the dairy work at Spains Hall. One slight drawback is, of course, the grocer's outcry for uniformity. Even large clubs and hotels are infected by it. With a private herd, though the quality of the butter is much finer than that obtained from factories, since uniformity is secured by working up the finest with the second quality, it is impossible to guarantee that each day's production will be exactly of the same tint as that of the day before. However, no one who has really learned to appreciate the merits of the finest home-made Jersey butter could



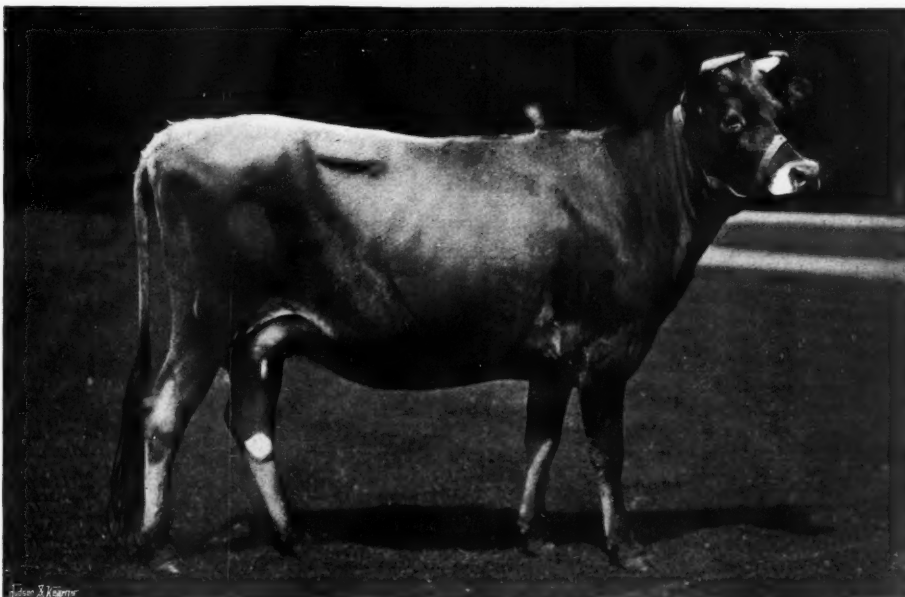
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PEN OF BLACK-FACED SUFFOLKS.

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appearance. We saw calves at every stage of growth, from a pretty newcomer to one or two now shaping as though they would turn into bulls of the first order of merit.

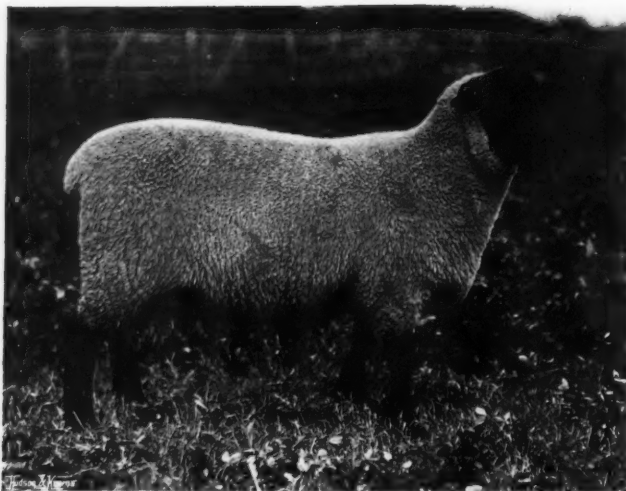
The cows are kept for dairy purposes, or, in other words, for butter-making, and the estate is one of the very few where the business is carried out at a profit that really makes it worth the trouble. About thirty-five cows are kept in milk during the year, and they yield from 7,000lb. to 8,500lb. of butter per annum. This is to a large extent sold to private customers at from 1s. 3d. to 1s. 6d. a pound, and as it is of a rich colour, excellent flavour, and perfectly made, a slight calculation will show the return on this head to be over £600 a year, the net result being to leave a profit, which must be considered very satisfactory in these times. We looked at the dairy, which is a very homely-looking one from the outside, though within it is a model of cleanliness and order. No separator is used, it having been found that the extra quantity of cream obtained by the employment of this machine does not compensate for certain disadvantages. In saying that, we, of course, do not speak absolutely. Where separation has to be done on a more extensive scale, the case might be



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SUFFOLK RAM LAMB.

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possibly be satisfied afterwards with the shilling a pound factory stuff.

Our readers already know that Spains Hall is famous for its animals, and sheep and cows do not exhaust the list. We saw several members of the celebrated donkey team, and what was of more importance, from the agricultural point of view, a vast number of those chickens that have been made to yield a handsome subsidiary income to the estate. They are of the Buff Orpington variety, and are found to involve comparatively little trouble, while they play a useful part in consuming the tail corn and other waste. As the higgler buys them in the yard and plucks them himself, the labour needed is not important, and the sale totals up to a useful amount in the course of the twelve months. It may be mentioned that in coming from the station we had abundant proof of the extent to which the peasant in the neighbourhood has taken up poultry-rearing.

A question being warmly discussed is the prospect of a light railway being constructed to run through the district. Great hopes are entertained in regard to this, but we confess to a certain amount of scepticism. Population is very sparse, and the lines run through similar agricultural country have not, as a rule, been productive of dividends, though where extensive cultivation is carried on they do very well. Of the convenience and even necessity of something being done there can be no doubt. It would be almost equally expensive to adopt the alternative of running a system of motor-cars, because in this part of the world the roads consist mostly of narrow lanes, in many of which two carriages cannot pass. Thus to make them suitable for a service of motor-cars it would be necessary to lay out a large sum on the highways. Quicker transport to London, however, would very much hasten the revival of agriculture in this curious territory so near to London, yet so far behind in what counts for material progress.

FROM THE FARMS.

SALE OF THE WHITTERN HEREFORDS.

SOMETIMES one is apt to think that Hereford cattle are going out of fashion as a pedigree breed, but the recent sale of the Whittern Herd rather tends to contradict this view. Of course, the late Mr. Green had got together as choice a collection of these cattle as is to be found in Great Britain, and, indeed, his death must be a severe blow to the patrons of the breed. He was a great believer in it, and for years past took a foremost place at all the principal shows in the country. At one time his bulls were famous, but in recent years his heifers have been much more to the front, and this fact was curiously emphasised at the sale. The highest price obtained was 450 guineas, given by Mr. T. R. Thompson for the well-known prize yearling heifer Spirea. Mr. Hamlen Williams gave 300 guineas for the young cow Silkweed, whose bull calf was sold to Mr. Rowlands for 260 guineas. Mr. G. A. Faber, M.P., bought the two year old heifer Ivy Lass for 105 guineas, and Mr. Christopher Williams paid 100 guineas for Silene. These good prices were fairly well maintained throughout, as may be judged from the fact that the average for sixty-five head, including calves, was the excellent one of £50 9s. It is pretty

certain that no other herd of Herefords in Great Britain would at the present time attain to anything like this average.

IS FARMING RUINED?

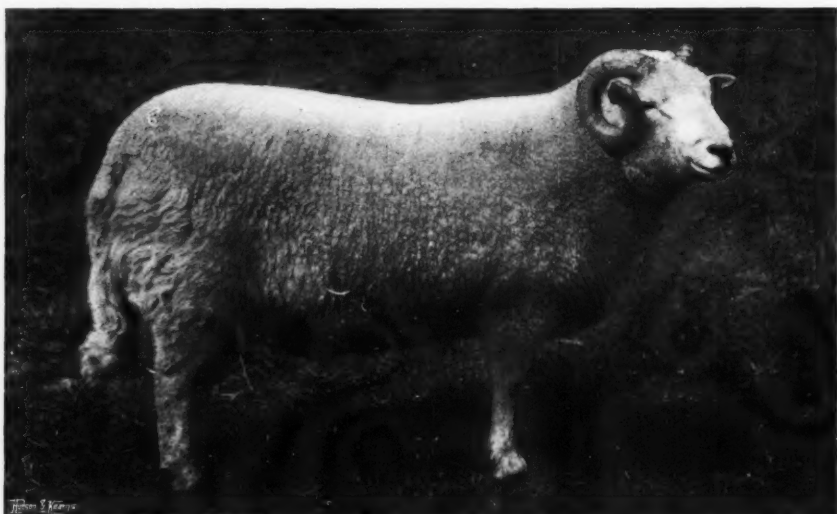
One part of the discussion going on about the proposed fiscal changes must interest all who are engaged in agriculture. It is the question raised, *apropos* of a speech by Mr. John Morley, whether agriculture has been ruined or not. Of course it is easy to see the bearing of this upon present controversy. The Free Traders are anxious to show that law processes have not rendered the profitable cultivation of land in England impossible, while the Protectionists are naturally anxious to demonstrate that agriculture is one of the industries that would be benefited by their policy. Those who know the real facts of the case will not wholly agree with either party. For example, Colonel Rasch, when he the other day adduced his own case, related that he let a farm for only as much as would cover the expenses, that is to say, land tax, tithes, and rates; but whereas a few years ago these cases were very common, they are now the exception, and in East Anglia, where land was held for next to no rental, it has now become difficult to obtain at all. For this we have to thank in large measure the new style of dairying. Wheat last week, we noticed, was about 25s. a quarter, at which no farmer can grow it profitably; but, on the other hand, dairy farming has very much improved during recent years, and a great many of the exorbitant profits of the middleman have been dispensed with. In other districts farming has been turned into new channels, and we believe that most of those who are engaged in it practically will agree with us when we say it was recovering from the depression until the present year, when the extraordinary rainfall has thrown everything back into a condition worse than it was before. Those who desire to prove that agriculture is doing badly will have abundant proof to show during the autumn and the coming winter, for the omens point to very great distress; but that is simply one of those disasters to which husbandry has always been and always will be liable, and is in no way due to a policy on the part of the Government.

WELSH SHEEP.

This week we give photographs of two Welsh sheep, one a shearing ram belonging to Mr. Conway Bell, and the other an aged ram, the property of Mr. William Leathes. The breed is very well known to farmers, and we give the illustrations mostly for the benefit of those who do not know where their favourite Welsh mutton comes from. Perhaps the mutton is not quite so much in vogue now as it was before Down sheep became so very fashionable, yet we believe the epicure will agree with us in thinking that the Welsh meat has a flavour to be sought for in vain elsewhere.

DAIRYING IN THE AUTUMN OF 1903.

A CURIOUS statement has been going the rounds of some of the farm papers to the effect that, on account of the wet season and the superabundance of grass, cows have been producing their milk at little cost, and that therefore dairy farmers must have been doing well financially. The writer has all along been in the thick of the fight, and is in touch with many others who are in the same struggle, and he can certify that the season for milk-producing purposes has been so disastrous to himself, and almost everyone he has compared notes with, that he is unable to understand how the statement to the contrary has arisen. It seems as if someone with a superficial knowledge of matters had assumed that because in a dry season cows suffer from a want of pasture, therefore it must be all right in a season like this, when they stand over their hoofs in grass. The stern facts of the case



G. H. Parsons.

MR. CONWAY BELL'S WELSH SHEARLING RAM.

Copyright

are, that probably never within the last generation have cows milked so badly, not only as regards quantity, but also as regards abnormal quality. The summer and autumn of 1903 since the middle of July has been a season of black disaster to the dairy farmer as well as to the corn grower. In the writer's case, the trouble began at the beginning of August. Previous to that, the animals were yielding very well, and keeping remarkably even as to total quantities day by day. On the Saturday before Bank Holiday the first serious drop occurred, and from that till the present time the decline has been continuous, until now the yield is only one-half the normal, or say three-fourths of the usual, autumn yield. Alongside of this, be it noted, the cows were getting an unusual amount of artificial feed, until at the present moment they are consuming their full winter allowance of cake and meal, and have been housed at night for over a week at time of writing. They will now, perhaps, begin to recover a little, but it is an exceedingly difficult and expensive job to get cows up when once they have got down.

One of the strangest points about the matter is the effects of the season on the analyses of the milk. Here are two from a series the writer had done for himself—taking the samples as fairly as he possibly could: Fat, 4.29; other solids, 8.11; fat, 4.11; other solids, 7.94. In other words, the fat was extremely high for the time of the year, while the other solids were nowhere within sight of the legal standard. This peculiarity obtained right through—a fat percentage high above the legal standard, and the other solids much under the same.

The whole matter seems to be due to the abnormal season through which we are passing. The writer has not experienced such a time within his own memory, and old men are harking back to the early sixties—over forty years ago—to find a match for the same. The excessive rainfall has caused a great growth of watery, innutritious grass, with the result that the cows have filled themselves up on food quite unsuited to produce milk in proper quantity, or quality, while the case has been aggravated by the fact that the animals have had to stand all the fearful weather we have had, and have had to lie on a cold, soaking wet bed. Dairy farmers will be thankful to get back to a normal state of matters again, though it is to be feared that the evil effects of the season will last right through the winter. The winter has to be faced on hay and roots made and grown in a bad season, and it is difficult to see where the evil is going to end. P. McCONNELL.

ON THE GREEN.

I SAID, not with originality, in speaking of the manner of the play for the *News of the World* prize, the dividing of Great Britain into sections for the preliminary qualifying rounds, and so on, that there was nothing new under the sun, so that in spite of the appearance of novelty about this, it was likely that the appearance was altogether deceitful, and, of course, I ought to have known, and even if I did not know might have suspected, that all that was good and fresh in the scheme had been anticipated by the ladies. Is it not ever thus? It is true that the ladies have not yet brought their competition, on these lines, virtually, to a conclusion—the professionals finished their tournament off as soon as the arrangements were made; but the ladies had their own scheme cut and dried before the mere man thought of it. It is to no base purposes of prize competition that they have applied their powers of organisation, but to county golf, in team matches, dividing the English world, like "all Gaul" in the days of Caesar, into three parts. The winning county teams of each division encounter each other finally at Sunningdale according to the following programme, as arranged by the fortune, or the misfortune, of the draw—Kent plays Devon on November 2nd, the winner of these two plays Worcester on November 3rd, and the loser plays Worcester on November 4th. The names of the divisional winning counties indicate clearly enough that the division was into East, West, and North. Sunningdale is regarded as sufficiently near the centre to be the final arena.

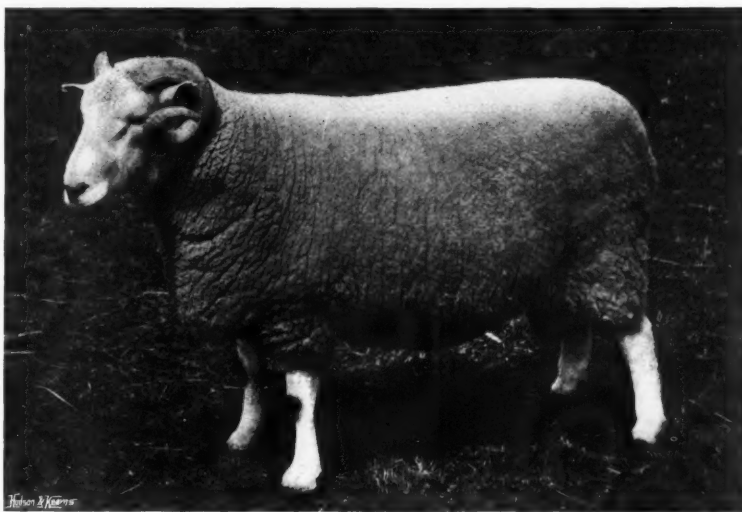
Mr. Fowler did well at the Sandwich Club's meeting, winning on both days, but the scores, 85 the first day and 81 the second, do not look as if there was that pressing necessity for making the course longer that some of the reformers advocate. For all that, it is a reform of which I am much in favour, for, so far as my humble judgment goes, it appears to me that the course as now arranged is far too easy when once a man has got over the big bunker that stares him out of countenance at every tee. It does not ask for much *finesse* in approaching once the tee-shot had been safely played. These fine tee-shots are enough in themselves to make a grand course of it, but that is not to say that it may not be made even better. I think that it may, and the scores at the last meeting are not to be accepted as an argument against that view, for, in the first place, the field did not include some of the strongest players that often are there, and the weather, especially on the first day, was all against low scoring.

Next door to Sandwich, too, at Deal, they have been very busy with the Bar Handicap Tournament, notable chiefly for the scratching of so large a number of the players in the first round. Mr. Ernley Blackwell scratched, and so did Mr. Mansfield Hunter. This took some of the interest out of it for the looker-on. Of scratch men (not in the sense of men who scratch), there were left Mr. Rand and Mr. Crabbe-Watt. The former is still surviving

in the semi-final tie. The latter was beaten in the ante-penultimate (portentous word!) by Mr. D. Stephen. Mr. Rand in that same heat did a great first half of 35, which is reported to be two better than anyone ever has done the first half at Deal before. Wynne, the professional, once did it in 37, and Mr. Eric Hambro in 38. So this was rather severe on Mr. Rand's opponent. The semi-finals and final are deferred, to be played at some date and place not yet fixed—is it not just like the Law and its delays to adjourn *sine die* just at the crisis?

To return to the Sandwich course for a moment. They tell me that it is unusually narrow for the moment, with less width than usual of a mown stretch between the long grass at the sides; and unmown grass is long in this year of record rain. All this must make the course mighty difficult on a stormy day—like the first of the competition days—and has to be considered in estimating the scores.

There is a note in last week's *Golf Illustrated* signed W. Dalrymple—one might know the writer, by the by, without the signature, by the crisp writing; why does Mr. Dalrymple not write more, in his trenchant manner, both on golf and other things?—about "Old Tom" and Allan Robertson. Only last week, in "On the Green," I said that Allan declined to play Tom a single. I know this to have been the case for many years, for Tom himself told me that it was so. But Mr. Dalrymple speaks of two matches in which these two actually did meet, with the result that Tom won both. It was later, I take it, that Tom would have been glad to play Allan again; but the latter would not. Mr. Dalrymple knows a deal more than I about these old Scottish heroes; I would not play him a match at Scotch golfing history on level terms at all. He goes on to say that Willie Park also wanted to play Allan, but Allan again declined. Tom took Willie up, but was beaten over four greens. He had his revenge, however, later. But how does Allan seem to come out of it all? That is the question one is impelled to ask. It is a most distasteful business to even raise the question about a famous player of the olden time; but did his fame rest on a very solid basis after all? All that we hear of him is that he would not put his credit to the test against the two best of his day. Yet he must have been a great player, surely. But will not one of the old school speak a word in his behalf and tell us just how



Parsons. MR. WILLIAM LEATHES' AGED WELSH RAM. Copyright

it is that he acquired his great name, on what performances his fame rested? Surely there must be some who can tell us?

Curiously enough golf does not seem to be a very popular game in the army where most sports are taken up with the most absolute enthusiasm. This is perhaps not quite so true of the regiments stationed abroad, but it was recently decided at a meeting of the officers of the Woolwich Garrison, that as: "Only four officers having expressed a desire to play golf on the barrack field, and three of these are not very keen upon it, it is not considered worth while to prepare the links at present." This step of course is to be deplored, but the nine-hole course is not such as to cause any great regret except among those who are "very keen." HORACE HUTCHINSON.

RACING NOTES.

THE only animal of any merit who won at Gatwick was Mr. Brassey's useful three year old Wild Oats, who had little difficulty in beating Robert le Diable at weight for age. The two year old Wrinkles beat a very moderate lot of older horses in the Surrey Stakes, run over six furlongs. Both races were of the nominal value of £500.

The two handicaps, representing the same amount, were won by indifferent horses carrying light weights, St. Moritz winning the Horley Handicap and the Yarmouth winner Milford Lad the County Nursery. The remaining racing at Gatwick, and the meetings at Wolverhampton, Newcastle, Thirsk, and Stockton, may be passed over, but at each of them, if the quality of the fields was poor, the entries were sufficiently numerous to provide fairly interesting sport.

The best racing of the week was that seen on Thursday and Friday at Sandown. Proceedings opened briskly when sixteen turned out for the Selling Nursery, won by the favourite, Arbaces. The going was very heavy, and all in favour of the lightly-weighted horses, as was proved throughout the meeting. Backers of favourites fared badly after the opening event. The chief disaster was in the Great Sapling Plate, in which Lord Camarvon's Santry appeared to have an easy task. Odds of 5 to 4 were laid on him, and

practically Vergia was the only other competitor to receive substantial support. The favourite went to the post in a listless fashion, and seemed quite unable to gallop in the race, which was won by Mr. Croker's Clonmell in irreproachable style. It was the winner's (a handsome son of the King's horse Florizel II.) first appearance on a race-course, and as he has plenty of engagements he may pay for following. Santry had met with an accident some time before the race, and it was found out later that he was seriously amiss, so his failure does not affect his reputation, which he may yet sustain by winning the Two Thousand Guineas. A field of seventeen contested the Orleans Nursery Handicap, won by Mr. Rothschild's Quisisana, who was last seen out in a selling plate at Kempton. Her nearest attendant, the Oriental Princess and Miss Archer fillies, had both previously won events of the same unpretentious character. The winner started at 100 to 7, which was about the price returned for the other two handicap winners, Morgendale and the Santa Barbara filly, and the ring, undoubtedly, had a good day, although Lord Ellesmere's Kroonstad, who started a well-backed favourite in the Coombe Autumn Plate, helped many backers to retrieve the greater part of their losses. Kroonstad won by sheer bulldog courage after a desperate struggle with Lady Drake, and I think that after Rock Sand and Zinfandel he is the best three year old in training. Although it was a small company that took advantage of the improved accommodation provided by the new stands, which have recently been built at a cost of about £25,000, it was a first-class day's racing which celebrated their inauguration. Backers did little better on Friday, although Cossid received most support in the Hook Plate for two year olds, in which he spread-eagled his field and vindicated for once the estimate the stable has always held of his capacity. His owner, Mr. Whitney, is selling his horses and retiring from the English Turf, accompanied by the regret of all connected with it. His generous support will be much missed, but he has met with a very scant measure of success, and his retirement will cause little surprise.

The Sandown Foal Stakes of £2,000 has usually been won by moderate animals, and Mr. James's Stephanas, who beat the faint-hearted Countermark and some very bad horses, is probably a little better than his predecessors. He has now won three valuable races for Mr. Arthur James, his owner, who bred him. The Temple Handicap, run over five furlongs, was another success for the handicappers, as in a field of sixteen the lightly-weighted Country Boy, who was never mentioned in the betting, won by a head from Out o' Sight, who carried the highest weight (and the most money) of those running, with Goodrest another head away. The Hermitage Handicap brought fresh disaster with the victory of Fleeting Love, an indifferent selling plater, and so ended the last of the flat-race meetings at Sandown in 1903. Perhaps the only suggestion conveyed for future events was that indicating the chance of Lady Drake in the Old Cambridgeshire, as she has only 7st. 3lb. to carry.

The list of weights allotted to the two year olds for the Free Handicap will be scanned with much interest, as the official estimate of the relative merits of the colts and fillies of the year. It is of course headed by Pretty Polly, who gives 10lb. as weight for sex to St. Anant and Santry, bracketed as the best of the colts. Public opinion would probably pronounce this to be a moderate estimate of her superiority. I do not propose to go through the handicap, which appears to be a very careful compilation. If I had to pick out one, as somewhat leniently treated, it would be Bronze Medal, to whom 7st. 11lb. is allotted, as, I believe, her recent improvement has astonished her connections, and, as Mr. Musker usually accepts, she will probably represent him. Another handicap which will attract attention is that for the Liverpool Autumn Cup. I have to write before the publication of the acceptances, among whom I hardly expect to see the name of the top-weight, Ypsilanti. Lord Derby's Andrea Ferrara with 7st. appears to be rather under-estimated, and Mr. Lambton's stable may perhaps add another to many previous Liverpool triumphs.

KAPPA.

BEGINNING OF THE HOCKEY SEASON.

NO game with the exception of golf is increasing in popularity so much at the present moment as hockey. It is, in fact, to the younger part of the population what golf is to their elders, for, unfortunately, hockey is not the sort of amusement that goes well with age and rheumatism. It is great fun while it lasts, but, like many other pleasant things in life, it does not last long. In school and college, however, there is no end to its popularity, and it seems to be equally favoured by both sexes, so that the hockey girl has become quite an institution in the land. During the course of the present season we hope to have an opportunity of showing her at play, though for the moment we are more concerned with the University game, and, indeed, our idea is that this is one of those pastimes which may best be conducted by the sexes separately. A strong boy is so much stronger and more active than a strong girl that the disparity introduced ruins anything in the shape of equal play, and this is as inconvenient to those played with as to those played against. The Hockey Association, therefore, may be commended for discountenancing mixed matches; at the same time, it ought to be fully recognised that hockey is one of the very best games for girls in the early part of their lives. If a girl is athletic at all, it gives full scope for the display and exercise of her muscles, testing both eye and leg and arm. Perhaps, however, it is just as well that the ladies have a Hockey Association

of their own, and little good would come of amalgamating it with the men's.

The match which we illustrate to-day is that played on Saturday last between Oxford University and the Hockey Association. The students so far had not quite felt their feet, and were compelled in a manner to run dark horses; that is to say, they had no opportunity of testing the play of two or three freshmen who were included in the team. In spite of this drawback, the Oxford players made a very good start, and for a while the game was all in their favour, and at half-time they had scored one goal to love, Church, of Trinity, being the player fortunate enough to score the goal. Nevertheless, on changing ends, the fortunes of the Oxford men seemed to change also, while the Association forwards seemed to draw renewed energy from their partial defeat. Within ten minutes of the second start, Livingstone was able to score a goal that made the game equal, and in a very short time Smith added a second point. Then followed some pretty play, in which Wilson made a capital run to the other end, and Beasley cleared. Livingstone managed to score a third goal, although the question was raised as to whether it was off-side or not. The next incident of importance was when Bomford very cleverly saved a shot by Smith, but once more Livingstone sent the ball flying into the net, with a stroke that would have done credit to a cricketer. Bomford now distinguished himself. He had a very warm



M. Dixon.

GENERAL VIEW OF THE GAME.

Copyright



M. Dixon.

JUST ON THE LINE.

Copyright

time, getting three shots in quick succession, but he managed to keep all clear till Pratt made a mistake, and Smith scored without difficulty. Thus the Hockey Association won by five goals to one, a result for which the excellent play of Livingstone and Smith was largely responsible in the second half. Of the 'Varsity men Stocks and Gunner came off best, and it was universally agreed that one of the freshmen, Horsfall, gave excellent promise of becoming a fine player.

This is the first important match of the season, but as the clubs this year have more fixtures than they were ever known to have had before, and the players are full of dash and enthusiasm, we may expect to see many splendid matches before the season is over. Hockey is not a game to which much practice is given in summer, and these early autumn tests seldom indicate the true form of those who take part in them. One man keeps himself fairly fit by cricket or other hard exercises during the summer months, another is given to reading books or loafing down by the side of the river. Very possibly he who dawdled all the summer may make a very poor show at the beginning of the season, and yet before a few matches have gone past develop into one of the pillars of the team. In this way hockey differs from almost every other conceivable game. It demands as much, if not more, activity than either football or cricket, and it is activity of a different sort. If a man keeps his arms pretty right, he will not be far out when he comes to wield the willow, and a football player who takes a run of five or six miles a day, or joins a good pack of harriers, will come up in

first-rate form when the whistle sounds; but in hockey it is necessary to keep both legs and arms going, and although this is quite possible, it is not done to anything like the extent that would fit a man to take this game seriously in the winter. Probably as time goes on we shall see a different state of things, for, unless we are much mistaken, it is certain that hockey is going to occupy as conspicuous and favourite a position in the public eye as any of the other pastimes. It has the advantage—some would call it a dubious advantage—of being a picturesque game that the spectator can watch with constant interest and pleasure. We should be very sorry if that feature led to the hankering after gate-money that has ruined so many of our outdoor pursuits. Nevertheless, one likes a game that gives pleasure to the looker-on, and this is one of the many reasons why we are always inclined to wish good luck to hockey. Even in its most elementary form it is at least amusing.

Not everyone knows, perhaps, that it began in the old "up-the-street and down-the-street" games in Scottish towns, some of which are played on Old Year's Night, some at Christmas, and many on "Fastern E'en." In this townsmen armed themselves with sticks and endeavoured to drive a ball through their neighbour's defence. That probably was the beginning of hockey as well as of football. Then it appeared again in a village game played with sticks and ball and called shinty. In the days of the writer's youth shinty was still a popular pastime in the North Country, and may be so till this day.

BOOKS OF THE WEEK.

MISS BEATRICE HARRADEN is a very popular novelist. According to the advertisements of her publishers, her books run to the twentieth thousand, and it, therefore, will be interesting as a gauge of popular taste to see what stuff her latest book is made of. *Katharine Frensham* (Blackwood) may be described as a romance of middle age. It opens with a scene in which a father confesses to his son, a boy of fifteen, and the most sickly sentimental lad ever presented in a work of fiction. This is the sort of thing:

"Alan," he said, almost imploringly, "don't fret like that. We will talk about it another time. Come, pull yourself together. We will go for a ride, and you can try the new cob."

"The boy sobbed on as though he had not heard."

"Alan," Clifford Thornton said.

"The boy looked up, and stifled his last sob."

"I don't want to go riding," he said. "I want to go and be alone."

"He rose from the sofa and dried his eyes. He did not seem ashamed of his tears; he offered no excuses for his sudden outburst of grief."

"I'm awfully upset, father," he said with trembling voice."

Next the father had a dream, and his dream was that he told his wife all his inmost thoughts, as thus:

"You have never known me for what I am," he said passionately. "You have spoiled my life, my spirit, and ruined my best talents. I tell you I had talents before you came and trampled on them. Listen to me. If ever a man has been spiritually murdered, it is I. But now the barrier of silence has broken down, and I dare to tell you that I despise your paltry mind and

petty temperament; that your atmosphere is an insult to me, and that I long and thirst and am starved to be free from the pressure of your daily presence. You have been merciless to me with your uncontrolled rages, your insane jealousies of me, my work, my ambitions, and my friends. I can bear it all no longer. The day on which we go our own ways will be the day of my re-birth."

It is related of a certain exorcist, that being called in to cure one possessed of the devil, he prayed with such vehemence that the very slates flew off the roof of the house. With something of that intensity did this dreamer dream, or, as his wife said, "You dreamed it, and it was so vivid to you that it broke through all barriers and reached me in my dream." After a few connubial amenities had passed, her heart failed, and she dropped down dead. That incident is to this story what the adventure with the Cyclops was to the *Odyssey*—the rest of the tale hinges on it. Clifford Thornton, in an access of remorse, began to look upon himself as a murderer. The feelings of the sentimental child may be gleaned from the following extract:

"And to think that those were the last words I ever said to her," he said, with almost a sob.

"He did not say that he blamed his father for telling him about the proposed separation, but he kept on repeating: 'If only I had not known. If only I had not known.'"

"And, of course, in his heart he was saying: 'If only father had not told me, if only he had not told me.'"

Comes on the scene Katharine Frensham, the heroine, a maiden of thirty-six summers. "He haunts me," is one of her

early remarks, and, to fall into the pleasing diction of our authoress, they have the same "aura." As far as love is concerned, there is no doubt of it from the beginning, and the reader who is prone to get excited over the end of a courtship, will find that the interest has dried up in a very early chapter. The great task Katharine has to perform is to reconcile this extraordinary boy—whom, by the by, the authoress takes quite seriously—to his father. For he had been seized by a deadly melancholy, as the following passage will make apparent:

"There is someone coming down from the woods," she said. "How distinctly one can see in this strange half-light."

"One of the cotters, perhaps," suggested Knutty.

"No," said Katharine; "it is the boy—it's Alan."

"They watched him with tears of sympathy in their eyes. They knew by instinct that he had been wandering over the hills, fretting his young heart out. They drew back, so that he might not see them as he passed up the garden. They heard him go into the back verandah, and up the outer stairs, leading to his room. They caught sight of his troubled face."

This boy acts a very prominent part, and it may be as well to say at once that Miss Harraden has here utterly missed the target. Alan is not a real boy, but a morbid girl masquerading

All that he or she wants is an abundance of the mawkish sentiment of which Miss Harraden appears to have an unlimited supply in stock.

Mr. Stephen Gwynn is one of the most promising of our younger writers, and we cannot help regretting that he could have perpetrated such an outrage as *John Maxwell's Marriage* (Macmillan). It is a book coarsely conceived and coarsely carried out. The plot is akin to that which Scott made, but in deference to better counsels abandoned, for "Saint Ronan's Well." The hero, if he can be called a hero, is engaged to a young woman, but on the day of the wedding she jilts him and runs off with an old sweetheart. The company are all gloriously drunk, and the father, partly out of a desire to retain the settlements at any cost, partly out of natural despotism, forces a younger daughter to take the place of the elder, in a scene of as brutal violence as we ever met with in works of fiction. But what intensifies the absolute vulgarity of this work is that the victim turns out to be no heroine, but a commonplace, selfish young woman. The whole thing is more fitted for the police-court than the library.

Sir A. Conan Doyle finds a subject made to his hand in the *Adventures of Gerard* (Newnes). Brigadier Etienne Gerard is a



J. Craig Annan.

A LANDSCAPE IN LOMBARDY.

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in trousers. Who could fancy a healthy English boy exclaiming, "Oh father, I have been so unhappy," over a misunderstanding between, as he would put it, the Mater and Pater. Miss Harraden, in fact, has no understanding of "the soaring human boy"; but it is not only with the characters that we find fault in this book. The construction is so bad that we cannot imagine how it could possibly have been worse. The story finishes almost at the beginning, and the subsequent incidents appear to have been invented for the mere purpose of dragging out the tale. There is no attempt at the culmination of interest which is the triumph of a really fine plot, and the object with which Katharine sets out, that of reconciling this boy to his father, is not large enough to sustain a prolonged interest. Moreover, this estimable young woman, though a model character, is extraordinarily long-winded and wearisome. The authoress has been so kind as to spare us her letters with the exception of one, but it is longer than a *Times* leader and as full of "nerves." One looks forward with a certain grim cynicism to the fact that this book will be popular just because it is bad enough to suit the taste of the novel reader of to-day, who seems to be absolutely careless of fidelity to human nature, careless of probability, and careless even about the plot.

soldier of the Napoleonic Wars, vain, amorous, boastful, brave, and if the story of his own adventures has too much Munchausenism to be altogether good art, the book, nevertheless, forms excellent reading for a railway-train or motor-car. We give one little extract from the account of the famous fox-hunt:

"Was Etienne Gerard to be stopped by a herd of fox-dogs? It was absurd. I gave a shout and spurred my horse.

"Hold hard, sir! Hold hard!" cried the huntsman.

"He was uneasy for me, this good old man, but I reassured him by a wave and smile. The dogs opened in front of me. One or two may have been hurt, but what would you have? The egg must be broken for the omelette. I could hear the huntsman shouting his congratulations behind me. One more effort, and the dogs were all behind me. Only the fox was in front. Ah, the joy and pride of that moment! To know that I had beaten the English at their own sport. Here were three hundred all thirsting for the life of this animal, and yet it was I who was about to take it. I thought of my comrades of the light cavalry brigade, of my mother, of the Emperor, of France. I had brought honour to each and all. Every instant brought me nearer to the fox. The moment for action had arrived, so I unsheathed my sabre. I waved it in the air, and the brave English all shouted behind me.

"Only then did I understand how difficult is this fox-chase, for one may cut again and again at the creature and never strike him once. He is small, and turns quickly from a blow. At every cut I heard those shouts of encouragement behind me, and they spurred me to yet another effort. And then, at last, the supreme moment of my triumph arrived. In the very act of turning I caught him fair with such another back-handed cut as that with which I killed the aide-de-camp of the Emperor of Russia. He flew into two pieces, his head one way and his tail another. I looked back and waved the blood-stained sabre in the air. For the moment I was exalted—superb."

CORRESPONDENCE.

VIPERS SWALLOWING YOUNG.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In support of this much-debated point, I can testify to a personal observation of the fact. In 1894 I was walking on Silchester Common (Hants), on a broiling August morning, when I came suddenly on a viper sunning itself on the sandy track across the heath. On my nearer approach, several young vipers, in appearance like large earthworms, wriggled hastily from the ground into their mother's mouth. I was so fascinated by the sight, and moved by the protective instincts of the reptile, that I allowed her to escape into the heather.—CECIL H. H. COOPER.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—My acquaintance with vipers is small, but I wish to record the following experience of my school-days. At midday play-hour we found on the sward near a wood a large and portly slow-worm, or blind-worm, waddling diligently away. We valiantly attacked it by slashing it with knives. Out of a wide gash in the side of the expiring reptile crawled briskly eight or ten young, about 2½ in. long. I collected a few in a paper, but my mother, with her inherited Eden instinct, commanded me to throw them into the pond. My last recollection of them is of their wriggling vainly, with their tails towards New Zealand and their little noses to the empyrean.—W. D.

PLANTING WILLOWS FOR BASKET-MAKING.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Can you help me with any information about willow-planting? Would not half a mile or so of disused but partially-watered canal-bed be turned to profitable account by the growing of willows therein for the supply of basket-makers, etc.? I should feel extremely obliged if you would give me your advice on the subject, or if you could recommend some handbook wherein the desired information might be found.—A. E. F. D.

[The place you mention should be a good one for the growing of osiers for basket-making, but without seeing it one can hardly speak definitely on the point. Though willows, or osiers, are water-loving plants, they are not aquatics—that is to say, they will not grow in water, and also will not grow where the water is stagnant. The ideal place for willows is close to moving water, but above it, so that the plant and its main roots are above the water-line, while the feeding-roots can ramble at will under the bed of the stream. The disused canal-bed you mention should be a good spot for willows, provided the water in it is on the move, but if it is stagnant it will be labour thrown away to plant it. If a supply of water is available, ditches about 1ft. wide by 15in. to 18in. deep should be cut through from end to end to ensure movement of the water. It need not flow fast if it moves sufficiently to change the water throughout once a day. These ditches should be from 12ft. to 15ft. apart, and connected with each other at certain distances by cross-ditches cut at right angles to the main ones. The distances between the latter must be determined by the ground and the amount of water available, but their purpose is to keep the level of the water at a certain point, so that there will be no appreciable difference of level all over the bed at any time. The soil from the ditches should be thrown on the beds, the tops of which should be from 15in. to 18in. above the level of the water in the ditches. These latter should be cleaned out annually after the osiers are cut, and all weeds, grass, etc., growing on their sides should be kept cut down for the first year or two after planting; but when the willows have become established, they will kill down any weeds growing near them. The beds should be dug over before planting, leaving a foot or so from the edges of the ditches untouched, or the latter will be filled up with the loose soil after the first heavy rains. Planting may be done at any time between October and March provided the ground is in a workable condition. Cuttings may be obtained and put in the beds, but the best start will be with "sets" obtained from a nursery or from someone who grows osiers for basket-making. These sets are one year old cuttings, and should be planted out a yard apart each way in this fashion

without cutting them back. The first year or two they will require special attention in keeping them clear of weeds. The next season after planting they should be cut hard back to within 3in. or so of the ground. This is best done in March, after the winter is past. Afterwards they should, of course, be left until fit for cutting, which varies according to the purpose they are required for. The willows grown for osiers are *Salix vitellina*, the golden osier, and *S. viminalis*, the common osier. In addition, there are various willows known as the Dutch, Huntingdon, Bedford, Skit, etc.—ED.]

EXTINCTION OF SPECIES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I was very glad to see your note in last week's "Country Notes" about the imminent extinction of the St. Kilda wren. May I enforce the appeal therein made to all who will be interested in the preservation of a curious species by pointing out that the precise fate that threatens the St. Kilda

wren has, I believe—and mainly through the same causes—overtaken already the fork-tailed petrel. Of course, these negatives in regard to a small species of bird are hard to prove, but the latest information that I have been able to gather seems to show the absolute extinction of this petrel, that has been hunted, and has had its nests harried, to death by unscrupulous collectors, chiefly concerned with the gross money value of the skins and eggs. Would it not be possible to place these islands under some special legislation or preservation, like the Farne Islands? Or a specially severe penalty might be enacted, with a reward to the informer, on any who took the eggs or the lives of any of these species that are nearing extinction.—H. G. H.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Having read with interest in your issue of October 24th the article by "E. K. R." re "Birds feeding in flocks," allow me to make a few comments and suggestions. In the first place, your correspondent states that "when a host of starlings or plovers shift from one spot to another, it is evidently a mere matter of chance where the greater number alight." This is surely questionable, for in certain fields one can be nearly sure of finding flocks of these birds most days, while others are but seldom tenanted. This applies in the case of peewits especially. The reason I think can generally be found in the nature of the ground. Secondly, "In flight they cover a considerable expanse of air, and when settled, they cover an equal expanse of ground." In parts where large tracts of ground are of identically the same nature, as in the marsh land of the Eastern Counties, this may be the case, but otherwise, flocks covering perhaps a mile when on the wing, will wheel around, and all alight within a field or two of their leader, the ground being some favourite spot where their pursuits are more easily rewarded than at a greater distance. "Why do not such birds as magpies, jays, and missel-thrushes, song-thrushes, and blackbirds feed out in the open too?" The thrush tribe do, indeed, feed to a very great extent in the open, both on lawns and meadows, the missel-thrush being the most partial of the above to field feeding, though surpassed by its winter congeners, the fieldfare and redwing. To hawks, now unfortunately nearly limited to the sparrow-hawk and kestrel, except where natural protection is provided by mountains, cliffs, and extensive moors, is attributed the absence of the smaller birds in the open, but is it not that their wants are more easily supplied under the hedgerows and in the ditches than among the coarse grass of the fields; or, in the case of ploughed land, are their less powerful bills able to sufficiently break up the clods of earth? Larks make no effort to cling to the hedgerows, though they should have learnt to be on the *qui vive* for hawks. Rather than quit their usual mode of livelihood, they prefer to take the risk. Lastly, with regard to evolutions of birds on the wing, and their "instantaneous imitation of movement," an extra sense, unpossessed of man, of the nature of telepathy, seems not an unlikely explanation of movements so simultaneous and striking.—C. S. M.

BIRDS REVISITING OLD NESTS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—A fact that is rather noticeable, but which I do not think has attracted the notice that it deserves (at least, I do not find it mentioned in the natural history books which are known to me), is that at this time of year, that is to say, towards the end of October, whenever we happen to get a few warm days, birds show a disposition to return, as if for a parting visit, or with some idea of renewing home ties and old associations, as we might almost think, to the vicinity of their spring nests. I have not been able to determine, in those cases that I have watched, whether they are the old birds or the young that do this, but am inclined to believe that both do so. We all know, of course, that the old pairs, after they think that the young are able to shift for themselves, will drive them right away from the neighbourhood of the old home. That is the way of life of birds and of most wild things—that they will take possession of a certain locality and allow no others of their kind within a certain area; and this instinct is apparent in their treatment of their offspring as soon as these cease to want their care, the parental affection changing to dislike and hostility. But whether they are old birds or young, or both, certain it is that in the warm days of late autumn many kinds return for a while to their own home neighbourhood and play about their nesting-places as they have not done either all through the summer, nor will do through the ensuing winter. Thus we find the tits coming back and playing about the boxes (though I never find that they actually enter them) in which they nested in the spring. Even some of the swallow tribe, notably the house-martins, that will be abroad all the winter, come for a few days to see their homes, flying up to them under the eaves, before leaving for the South. Do the birds do this because some tumult of the domestic affections that is not due until the spring has begun prematurely to agitate them—is it all inspired by the thought of the nesting season and a delusive idea that spring is at hand? Or is it just a "look round," so to say, in order to see that things are likely to be all right about their homes when they come to inhabit the neighbourhood again in springtime? Perhaps it is impossible that we can ever know the motives; but the facts are, at any rate, worth noticing, for they are curious, and I do not know that writers have drawn the attention to them that they deserve.—H.

CUCKOO EATING MUD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I think it may interest your readers to hear of a cuckoo myth or saying new to me—possibly, therefore, new to them. It comes from Sussex, which is a great county for the cuckoo; possibly also, on that account, a great county for the cuckoo myths. They have the belief there that an old woman on Ashdown Forest keeps the cuckoo in a cage all the winter and lets him out in the spring. I have heard it suggested with probability that the old woman's possession of a cuckoo clock was the origin of this legend. But does it not date back to a time before cuckoo clocks existed? But the saying that I was going to tell you of is that the land will keep damp "till the cuckoo has eaten up the mud." The people, when you ask what it means, tell you that the cuckoo comes back in spring about the time that the

winter mud dries up—hence the saying about his eating it up. Sussex, needless to say, is a great place for mud, no less than for cuckoos. The roads of that county have always had an ill name—see Horace Walpole's letters and others. I do not find that the Sussex folk have the idea, common to many parts of England, that the cuckoo becomes a sparrow-hawk in winter. They have accounted for his winter disappearance sufficiently by the help of the old woman and her cage.—F. BEESLEY.

AN ADDER IN A MOUSE-TRAP.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I am sending you herewith a photograph of an incident which occurred near here, and which I have never before heard of, or met with anyone who has. An adder was caught in a twopenny—spring-back—mouse-trap, which had been set with five other traps for mice, the latter being both abundant and troublesome. They were set upon a bank close to some stables in the evening, and in the morning only two were thrown—a mouse having been caught in one and the adder in another. The adder on being opened was found to have swallowed a large mouse. The adder measured 22in. in length.—ARTHUR BATT, Brockenhurst, Hants.

A RARE BIRD.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In reading your issue of July 18th, I see that Nordmann's pratincole, *G. Melanoptera*, was seen at Romney Marsh. I had the pleasure of observing a pair of these very rare birds near my home at Bromfield. They were first noticed at the end of June, and they stayed till the end of July. I frequently saw them perched on the telegraph wires, and then take a quick flight away, and go down to the shallows of the river and run along on the sand. They were a pair, undoubtedly, and possibly may have bred in the sand-banks by the side of the river Onny. My attention was first called to these birds by someone in the village wanting to know what they were.—HENRY GRAY.

THE WHITE FEATHER.

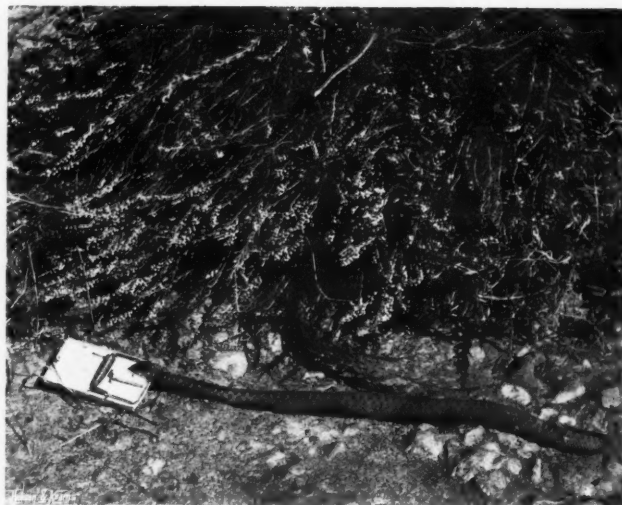
[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I should be glad to know if any of your correspondents have noted an unusual prevalence of white feathers in wild birds this autumn. I reside within seven miles of Liverpool, and have recently noted a thrush and a house sparrow with many white feathers in the wings and tail.—W. E. G.

MAKING A CROQUET LAWN.

[TO THE EDITOR.]

SIR,—I should be much obliged if you would kindly give me your advice on the following matter. This autumn my mother is going to give us a croquet lawn by doing away with a gravel path and joining two lawns together. We live in a sort of crescent with two other people, and are only yearly tenants. We are doing the lawn ourselves. The neighbours have given their consent, but are not helping; so we want to make the lawn as nice as we can, but not to spend too much. We have had an estimate, and it will cost between £18 and £20, which includes six loads of clay, 300 flags of grass, half-bushel (I think) of grass seed, and four loads of soil (I think), but am not quite sure of the last two items, as we are at the sea. The man will also put on the lawn two loads of cinder siftings out of our back garden, and make good any damage done. Our lawn is so dreadfully uneven—the lowest part is over 1yd. lower than the highest part—so the man proposes to make a bank about 2ft. high in the lowest part and to sink the high part, and so by that means we save a bank over 1yd. high. The man says that we have about 6in. of good soil under the grass, and a good drainage of bricks, etc., underneath. Our lawn is most dreadfully damp and soft. Up to the present it has only had an occasional rolling, and cut once a week, and of course all our trees round do not help to make it dryer. Our lawn will be 25yds. long by 16yds. wide, and the man says the six loads



of clay, the two loads of our cinder siftings, and plenty of rolling ought to give us a fast lawn, as by rolling and having the clay we shall get a firm surface. What do you think, as of course now people are so very particular what kind of lawns they play upon, and no one says "thank you" for a slow lawn? Would you kindly tell me if you think the materials named will make a fast lawn? If not, what would you suggest my doing? My mother is a widow, and we have to look after ourselves, and we know very little of gardening, and only have a small piece, so that we only employ a jobbing gardener, who knows very little. The man who would do our lawn understands about laying lawns, but does not seem to know what we mean by a fast lawn, and for one thing it is there we seem to stick (I forgot to mention that the above man is

not our jobbing gardener, but a special man). I do hope you will be able to tell me what to do. I am enclosing you a rough plan, which I hope you will be able to make out, and may be a little guide to you. The part where I have marked "a very large maple tree," and also where I have put "new bed," is now grass, and we propose taking that grass to put where the gravel path is, and to fill up other places, and to sow seed where we take the grass from. Do you think the new bed will help to make the grass damper, as we have had to take two small beds away from the neighbours to make our lawn as wide as it will be now, and to make up they were each to have a round bed out of the piece I have marked "new bed." They will only put flowers in, no shrubs. We are allowing a carriage drive all round, about 10ft., but it is

just possible in places it may only be 9½ft. I do hope you will not mind my troubling you, and will tell me how to make a really fast lawn. Would you kindly say how soon we ought to begin our lawn? I know our lawn will be nothing like full size, but thought even a 25yds. by 16yds. one, if fast and nice and level, is better than nothing.—MUNDESLEY.

[There is no reason why you should not have a good fast lawn with the materials you have, if, as the gardener assures you, there is plenty of drainage. Granted that, the pace up to which you can work the lawn depends in a large measure on the amount of cutting and rolling you do. A lawn below trees, or overshadowed by them, is apt to be slower than one that is not thus shaded. On the other hand, you can roll and mow such a lawn a good deal closer than one that is exposed to the sun, and so requires some length of the grass blades to be left on to give it shade. Further than this it is hardly possible to give you any advice without knowing the nature of the ground. A good deal depends on the way the levelling work is done and the character of the winter. If it is a wet open winter, your lawn will have a much better chance than if it is long frosty. We cannot suppose that the making of the new bed will dispose the lawn to be damper. You might begin at the work any time now, for it is always better to get turfing done before there is a great risk of frost.—ED.]

CLOUD PHOTOGRAPHS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Like your correspondent of October 3rd, I was much interested in the cloud photographs in COUNTRY LIFE. I enclose one which you may think worthy of reproduction. It was taken near the Gibbet Cross, Hindhead, on September 6th at 5 p.m.—J. B. RICHARDSON.

[We are very much obliged to our correspondent and to the numerous readers of COUNTRY LIFE who have sent cloud photographs, and hope shortly to publish a selection of them. So many really beautiful photographs have been sent that it is evident much interest has been aroused, and we shall be glad to receive more pictures, preferably those with some sort of foreground; that is, not photographs of a mere cloud, like that sent by our previous correspondent.—ED.]

